

Advance Policy Questions for Lieutenant General Richard D. Clarke, USA
Nominee for Commander, United States Special Operations Command

Relationships

Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to the following offices:

The Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of Defense is the USSOCOM Commander's next superior command authority in the operational chain of command. If confirmed, I will look to the Secretary of Defense for the operational authority and the resources to develop and employ the best trained and most capable Special Operations Forces (SOF) to meet the challenges of a highly uncertain global security environment now and in the future. The USSOCOM Commander owes the Secretary of Defense his military advice on all aspects of training, equipping, managing, and employing SOF in support of national security objectives.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS)

The USSOCOM Commander coordinates activities through the CJCS. As the senior military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense, the Chairman is essential in communicating SOF capabilities and requirements to the President and Secretary of Defense. Coordination of USSOCOM activities ensures that the Chairman remains fully informed in support of his responsibilities and for coordination of USSOCOM staff and the Joint Staff efforts to meet Presidential and Secretary of Defense directed tasks.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD (P)) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy. The USD (P) develops, coordinates, and oversees the implementation of a wide variety of Department policy, including matters related to planning, programming, budgeting, and execution of special operations activities. If confirmed, I will work closely with the USD (P) to ensure USSOCOM activities are closely aligned with Department policies.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD (I)) is the principal intelligence advisor to the Secretary of Defense. He exercises authority, direction, and control on behalf of the Secretary of Defense over all intelligence and security organizations within the Department of Defense (DoD), including the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, the Defense Security Service, and the intelligence components of the combatant commands and military services. Across the Defense Intelligence components, the Secretary oversees the \$21.2B Military

Intelligence Program, the Defense portion of the \$59.9B National Intelligence Program, the intelligence interests within the Battlespace Awareness portfolio, and over 110,000 personnel. He is also dual-hatted as the Director of Defense Intelligence (DNI) in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and reports to the DNI in this capacity. He is the Department's principal interface with the Central Intelligence Agency and other elements of the Intelligence Community, and represents the Department on intelligence and sensitive operations at the National Security Council.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD (A&S)) serves as the DoD Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) and the Defense Acquisition Executive (DAE) responsible for all matters relating to the DoD Acquisition System, including system design, development, procurement of goods and services, sustainment of systems, and providing Department-wide policy. Per Title 10, Section 167, the USSOCOM Special Operations Acquisition Executive (SOAE) derives their authority to conduct acquisition from the DAE. If confirmed, I will ensure USSOCOM acquisition activities, in coordination with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD (SO/LIC)), are executed by the SOAE under the authorities delegated to the Command by the DAE. In addition, I will ensure that the Command is effectively implementing policies and procedures for logistics, maintenance, material readiness, and sustainment support to the warfighter.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD (R&E)) is responsible for overseeing the research, engineering, and technology development activities across the DoD enterprise, and is mandated with driving the key technologies (cyber, space, unmanned systems, machine learning/artificial intelligence, directed energy, hypersonics) to ensure technological superiority for the Department of Defense. If confirmed, in coordination with ASD (SO/LIC), I will ensure USSOCOM Science and Technology research activities and funding are complimentary to and aligned with the Department research policy, processes, and priorities. In addition, we will assist in the initiation and implementation of acquisition pathways that embrace agile practices that innovate, develop, exploit, and reduce barriers of entry for commercial technologies and non-traditional defense partners.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

ASD (SO/LIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the USD (P) and the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations and low intensity conflict matters. The principal duty of the ASD (SO/LIC) is the overall oversight of Special Operations activities within the Department of Defense, including USSOCOM. The FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 922 codified the position of the ASD (SO/LIC) formally in the chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander USSOCOM to exercise authority, direction, and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of SOF, including the readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. As I state in subsequent responses, the USSOCOM Commander works

closely with ASD (SO/LIC) in the execution of “service-like” authorities for SOF under the revised Title 10 U.S.C. section 167.

The Service Secretaries

The USSOCOM Commander’s authority over the Service components assigned to him is clear in the Goldwater-Nichols Act, but requires close coordination with the Service Secretaries to ensure that USSOCOM does not intrude upon each Service Secretary’s legal responsibilities. Close coordination between the USSOCOM Commander, the ASD (SO/LIC), and each of the Service Secretaries is also essential to gaining and maintaining the Services’ support of SOF with support units from the conventional force and with service-common materiel.

The Service Chiefs

Without the full support and cooperation of the Service Chiefs, the USSOCOM Commander cannot ensure the preparedness of his assigned forces to execute his assigned missions. The Service Chiefs also play a critical role in the promotion, assignment, retention, training, professional military education, and allocation of special and incentive pays for SOF personnel. The Joint Chiefs are also a source of experience and judgment that every Combatant Commander may call upon. If confirmed, I will continue a full and frank dialog with the Service Chiefs.

The other combatant commanders

Successive USSOCOM Commanders have fostered an atmosphere of teamwork and trust in their relationships with the Combatant Commanders. These relationships have only strengthened over the last 18 years as trans-regional threats have emerged and certainly since USSOCOM has been responsible for synchronizing planning for global operations against terrorist networks. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the other Combatant Commanders to achieve our common objectives against trans-regional threats, violent extremist organizations (VEO), and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD). I will be committed to providing the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) trained and ready SOF to support national and theater security objectives.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Commander of USSOCOM?

In my view, the next Commander of USSOCOM will confront three principal challenges. We must continue to serve as the Department’s Coordinating Authority for Countering Violent Extremist Organizations (CVEO) and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD). In accordance with the National Defense Strategy, we must address our eroding military advantage to compete with China and Russia. We must drive transformation of the force and of our organization to improve our lethality, agility, and sustainability in a complex, strategic environment.

In order to confront these challenges we need an interoperable, healthy, trained, and ready Special Operations Force, to deliver lethal forces and capabilities globally, as well as provide SOF unique capabilities to expand the competitive space with our strategic competitors below the level of armed conflict.

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

Through the Coordinating Authority delegated to Commander, USSOCOM, for both CVEO and CWMD, I will work closely with the Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and as directed, other departments and agencies to enable alignment of planning, resources, and authorities.

In regard to Russia and China, USSOCOM will work closely with the Combatant Commands, the interagency, allies, and partners to expand the competitive space. Options to do this include working closely with allies and partners regionally to challenge malign behavior, enhancing regional exercises with SOF partners, and employing Military Information Support Operations (MISO) capabilities to expose behavior that is inconsistent with international norms.

In order to provide trained and ready SOF to the Combatant Commands, I will look closely at joint exercises, readiness cycles, training, and pre-deployment requirements for all elements in USSOCOM. Additionally, I will continue to place priority on the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) program and the ethics programs that are currently in place to ensure that a healthy and ethically-based SOF warrior is prepared to deploy.

What are the most important lessons you have learned during your tenure in senior leadership positions in the Department of Defense?

Leadership remains the critical element to mission accomplishment and as a senior officer, I must apply direct, indirect and strategic leadership at all times.

As a senior officer, not only do I have to work within a joint construct, but I must have a knowledge, understanding, and working relationship with the Interagency, Congress, and industry.

Allies and partners are a key advantage that share the burdens of common defense, increase our access, through basing and posture, and provide legitimacy to our missions. Our exchanges, training, and interoperability benefit us.

If confirmed, what priorities would you establish in terms of issues that must be addressed by the Commander of USSOCOM?

USSOCOM is fully committed to winning the current fight against VEOs, expanding the competitive space with regard to China and Russia, and setting the conditions for contingencies such as North Korea and Iran. We must transform our force to be prepared to deal with all future adversaries. Third, in conjunction with Combatant Commands and the Services, we must ensure that SOF are organized, trained, equipped and supported for success when they deployed.

Finally, we must continue to place the greatest emphasis on selecting, retaining, and empowering our people, and sustaining them and their families.

Relations with Congress

What are your views on the state of the relationship between USSOCOM and the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) in particular, and with Congress in general?

I understand that USSOCOM maintains a robust and professional relationship with the SASC. I firmly believe that our relationship with Congress and its committees must be positive, with a demonstrated and mutual willingness to work through complex issues together. There is clear evidence, by the support SOF has received over the years--the inclusion of new and evolving authorities in legislation, the collaboration on legislative proposals to support the command, and the genuine concern for the families, health, and well-being of the SOF community-- that the SASC, and Congress in general, have been very supportive of USSOCOM.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and USSOCOM?

To continue a healthy relationship between USSOCOM and Congress, I would sustain the credible, consistent, and transparent sharing of information that builds understanding between us. Doing so requires a personal investment by myself and the members of my staff, and ultimately must be reflected in the actions of the Command. I would emphasize the willingness on USSOCOM's part to listen and understand the challenges that Congress and the American people are facing and how we, in service to the Nation, are part of the solution. Further, I would actively seek the input of Congress as USSOCOM develops new capabilities and seeks new or improved authorities that might be required to complete the varied missions we are tasked to accomplish. If confirmed, I will ensure the Command complies with congressional reporting and other legal requirements, and if unable to meet your expectations on time or as directed, our staff will reach out to you to explain the circumstances, and work towards an amenable solution. Ultimately, we are empowered by the authorities and resources provided through legislation to conduct our assigned missions, and I am committed to providing the information needed for you to make informed decisions. SOF are doing amazing things on behalf of the Department and this country. Seeing it firsthand enables the Congress to not only conduct its constitutionally-mandated oversight role, but to gain a greater appreciation of the professionalism and competency of these fine Americans who have answered the Nation's call.

Civilian Oversight of USSOCOM

Section 922 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 instituted several modifications to the roles and responsibilities of the ASD (SO/LIC) as well as the relationship between the ASD (SO/LIC) and the Commander of USSOCOM in order for the ASD (SO/LIC) to more effectively fulfill its "service secretary-like"

responsibilities to provide civilian oversight of and advocacy within DOD for USSOCOM's service-like requirements.

What is your understanding of the organizational and administrative relationship between ASD (SO/LIC) and the Commander of USSOCOM?

The FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 922 codified the position of the ASD (SO/LIC) formally in the chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander USSOCOM for Title 10, organize, train, and equip responsibilities. This recognition and strengthening of the ASD (SO/LIC) in his Service Secretary-like role, providing for "Authority, Direction and Control of special operations-peculiar administrative matters," complements our own long standing Service-like role. Leveraging our own, the Services', and OSD's existing processes and procedures, if confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD and his staff to ensure he can fulfill his responsibilities for advocacy and oversight in the most efficient and effective manner possible, while avoiding the creation of redundant headquarters bureaucracy.

What is your understanding of the role of the ASD (SO/LIC) in the following functions:

1) Preparation and review of Major Force Program 11 and USSOCOM's Program Objective Memorandum;

To meet the intent of Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA, ASD (SO/LIC) now approves USSOCOM's budget submission and promulgates fiscal guidance.

2) Requirements validation, the acquisition of special operations-peculiar capabilities, and the research, development, and procurement functions of USSOCOM;

Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA directs ASD (SO/LIC) to exercise authority, direction, and control of all special operations-peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces. That authority, direction, and control include requirements validation, acquisition of special operations-peculiar capabilities, and USSOCOM's research, development, and procurement functions.

3) Organization of USSOCOM;

Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA directs ASD (SO/LIC) to exercise authority, direction, and control of all special operation-peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of SOF. That includes the organization of USSOCOM.

4) Management of civilian personnel; and

Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA directs ASD (SO/LIC) to exercise authority, direction and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of the special operations command, including the readiness and organization of special operations forces, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. That includes the management of USSOCOM's civilian personnel.

5) Manning, training, equipping, and global force management of Special Operations Forces (SOF);

Under Section 167 of Title 10, ASD (SO/LIC) is tasked with exercising authority, direction, and control of all special operations-peculiar administrative matters relating to the readiness, organization, training, and equipping of SOF as part of its "service secretary-like" responsibilities. These responsibilities also include the exercise of administrative oversight for readiness and the organization of SOF, resources, equipment, and civilian personnel. ASD (SO/LIC) participates in Global SOF Management forums to remain cognizant of any allocation of resources, organization, train, and equip issues.

In their report to Congress dated November 14 2018, the National Defense Strategy Commission says that "...civilian voices have been relatively muted on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy, undermining the concept of civilian control."

Do you agree with this assessment?

I have observed civilian voices at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy, and recognize that civilian control of the military is a core principle upon which our government is founded. If confirmed, I will always recognize and appreciate the control and direction that the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, ASD (SO/LIC), and other civilian leaders provide to USSOCOM and its mission. The only way to ensure that a military strategy is effective and successful is to ensure it aligns with the policy and direction that our civilian leaders provide.

The National Defense Strategy Commission report also says that "...allocating priority—and allocating forces—across theaters of warfare is not solely a military matter. It is an inherently political-military task, decision authority for which is the proper competency and responsibility of America's civilian leaders."

What organizations and civilian positions, in your opinion, should participate in decisions regarding allocating priority and special operations forces across theaters of warfare?

USSOCOM currently exercises a rigorous, collaborative effort across the entire SOF enterprise in order to ensure a transparent prioritization process exists to combat global threats. This collaboration effort, known as Global Special Operations Synchronization (GSOS), relies upon active input and regular participation from the SOF Service Components, Theater Special Operation Commands (TSOC), and civilian oversight from ASD (SO/LIC). Additionally, our interagency partners, have an important voice in SOF allocation decisions, especially outside

areas of armed conflict. The Commander of USSOCOM approves the final recommendation for allocation of SOF in support of the GCCs, which is then submitted to the Secretary of Defense for approval in accordance with his priorities.

The National Defense Strategy Commission concludes “It is critical that DOD and Congress---reverse the unhealthy trend in which decision-making is drifting away from civilian leaders on issues of national importance.”

What are your recommendations on how to stop the drift of decision-making away from civilian leaders on issues of national importance?

I am confident that the Section 922 Service Secretary-like roles and responsibilities for ASD (SO/LIC) reaffirms civilian leadership over USSOCOM. In the end, I recognize the authority of civilian leadership and will continue to abide by it.

National Defense Strategy

The unclassified summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) states that “long-term strategic competitions with China and Russia are the principal priorities for the Department, and require both increased and sustained investment.” It further states that “the Department will sustain its efforts to deter and counter rogue regimes such as North Korea and Iran, defeat terrorist threats to the United States, and consolidate our gains in Iraq and Afghanistan while moving to a more resource-sustainable approach.”

In your view, how can USSOCOM most effectively support implementation of the NDS?

The 2018 NDS describes how the U.S. will compete, deter, and win in a more competitive and dangerous security environment. Countering VEOs and WMD remains a priority and USSOCOM’s role as the Coordinating Authority for both of these problems directly relates to NDS accomplishment. Additionally, SOF can effectively support NDS implementation by providing strategic options to political decision-makers to expand the competitive space relative to China and Russia. SOF has capabilities and complex problem-solving abilities that apply well to all of the NDS challenges.

Where do you believe SOF can provide the greatest impact to support NDS-directed efforts to counter China and Russia?

Historically, our SOF have done more than just fight VEOs. From the Office of Strategic Services through the Cold War era, our unique ability to pursue special warfare campaigns has given us an advantage and led directly to strategic success. In looking to counter China and Russia today, neither of these challenges will be addressed easily or quickly. As part of a long-term campaign, SOF provides strategic options to expand the competitive space, by working with allies and partners and conducting activities that are short of armed conflict.

Does USSOCOM require any additional capabilities or force structure in order to support the objectives laid out in the NDS?

If confirmed I will look at the requirements for capabilities or force structure, paying particular attention to readiness and deployment-to-dwell ratios.

In your view, how can a “more resource sustainable approach” to combatting terrorism be achieved?

We recognize that the U.S. and its partners and allies cannot defeat all VEOs everywhere on the globe. The NDS, along with the Global Campaign Plan for VEOs (GCP-V), provide priorities for addressing global VEO threats. We focus our SOF resources on defeating only the most dangerous VEOs (those which have demonstrated capability and intent to attack the U.S. homeland), while allocating fewer resources to degrading, disrupting, and monitoring VEOs which present a regional or local threat to U.S. interests. Working with and leveraging like-minded partners, including allied interagency and law enforcement capabilities and authorities, to address the threat and mitigate the risk against less capable regional VEOs allows SOF to focus on the more capable, trans-regional VEO threats.

How do you intend to balance the competing requirements of continuing global counterterrorism requirements while also supporting the NDS-directed priority lines of effort to counter China and Russia?

Over the past 18 years, the challenge was terrorism, and that threat, while diminished, has not gone away. The future and greater challenges will be China and Russia. First, we must maintain the pressure on the most capable VEOs that have intent to attack the homeland. Secondly, we must lead the development of plans, policy, and doctrine for the best employment of SOF globally and develop operating concepts that drive the coherent employment of SOF. Next, we must resource the most appropriate use of SOF to meet operational requirements as we sustain and expand our trusted network of key allies and partners, increasing our access and leveraging their placement, cultural awareness, and niche capabilities. Finally, and arguably most importantly, SOF must transform through relentless innovation and experimentation in every domain to provide the access, knowledge, and understanding to support the Nation’s ability to deliver asymmetric dominance against adversary capabilities.

Special Operations Missions

In your view, are the special operations activities specified by section 167 of Title 10, United States Code, sufficient to meet the requirements of the evolving global security environment and implementation of the NDS?

The ten special operations activities specified in USC Title 10, Section 167 are sufficient to meet the requirements of the evolving global security environment and the implementation of the NDS. The tenth specified authority in particular--to perform “Such other activities as may be specified by the President or the Secretary of Defense”--provides adequate flexibility to meet NDS requirements.

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

At the moment, I am not prepared to advocate for divestiture of current USSOCOM missions. If confirmed, using the NDS as the foundation, I will review the range of SOF missions and ensure that we account for the priorities and ever-changing global environment.

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

If confirmed, using the NDS as the foundation, I will review the range of SOF missions specified in Section 167 of Title 10 to ensure that they reflect the ever-changing global environment and are sufficient to complement the joint force's capabilities while providing the flexibility SOF requires to adapt to meet national priorities.

Size of Special Operations Forces

Do you believe special operations forces are appropriately organized and sized to meet global requirements?

USSOCOM deploys contingency and rotational forces directly tied to warfighting and partner development in support of GCCs. USSOCOM continually assesses and modifies its formations to optimize required capabilities and capacities. If confirmed, using the NDS as the foundation, I will continue to assess and review the organization and size of SOF to ensure that it is optimized to meet global requirements and assigned responsibilities.

Combating Terrorism

What is your understanding of the 2018 U.S. National Strategy for Counterterrorism?

The Strategy is based upon six lines of effort that the U.S. will pursue: 1) pursuing terrorist threats to their source; 2) isolating terrorists from financial material, and logistical sources of support; 3) modernizing and integrating a broader set of U.S. tools and authorities to counter terrorism and protect the homeland; 4) protecting U.S. infrastructure and enhance preparedness; 5) countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment; and 6) strengthening the counterterrorism abilities of international partners. The Strategy directs operations along these lines to diminish terrorists' capacity to attack our homeland and our interests overseas, to sever their sources of strength and support, to diminish their ability to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize violence in the homeland, to prepare Americans and protect them in the homeland, to deny terrorists the ability to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction, and to enable public sector, private sector, and foreign partners to take a greater role in preventing and countering terrorism. The desired end state of the Strategy is to eliminate the terrorist threat to the U.S., secure all of our borders and ports of entry against terrorist threats, prevent terrorists and their ideologies from undermining our way of life, and enable foreign partners to address terrorist threats so that these threats do not jeopardize the collective interests of the U.S. and our partners. USSOCOM will continue to play

a significant role in the new U.S. National Strategy for Counterterrorism and provide value as we have in the past: by leveraging indigenous mass and potential, developing influence and wielding understanding, conducting precise lethal and non-lethal operations, responding to crises, enabling the Joint Force, and providing a unique global perspective.

What are the roles and responsibilities of USSOCOM in supporting the strategy and how would you fulfill such responsibilities if confirmed?

Terrorism remains a threat to the security of Americans at home and abroad. The growth and expanding influence of trans-regional threats pose a significant challenge. VEOs have proven themselves highly resilient and adaptable, and less reliant on nation-state sponsors for funding and safe havens. Our Special Operators will be called upon to protect the Nation from these threats, and to build the capacity of partners and allies to deny terrorists and violent extremists from the safe havens they need to develop and launch attacks.

As the force provider for SOF, the USSOCOM Commander must prepare his forces and sustain a high state of readiness for the full range of conflict and contingency scenarios. We must balance the steady-state requirements to meet current challenges while preparing for a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous future. Investing now in partnerships, concepts, access, and capabilities will ensure we have the competitive advantage in the future. Doing so effectively requires the right level of resources and the right approach to sustaining our force.

If confirmed, how would you seek to fulfill USSOCOM's assigned responsibilities for synchronizing global operations against terrorist networks?

We will fulfill our role as the Coordinating Authority for CVEO by identifying opportunities to achieve trans-regional effects against VEOs and their enablers, and providing recommendations to the CJCS in his role as the Global Integrator. We will support the CVEO efforts of the GCCs, maintaining flexibility and adaptiveness to respond to emerging VEO threats, while executing the Secretary of Defense's decisions to allocate SOF optimally for steady-state CVEO operations.

Do you believe current authorities of the USSOCOM Commander are adequate for USSOCOM to fulfill its responsibilities for synchronizing global operations against terrorist networks? If not, what changes would you recommend?

My understanding is the current authorities are adequate for USSOCOM to fulfill its responsibilities for coordinating the planning of global operations against terrorist networks. However, because the global situation consistently changes, we must regularly assess authorities in order to be adaptive and flexible to outpace our adversaries. With continued Congressional support in the form of additional authorities, DoD and the U.S. Government have been able to apply pressure against VEOs in new and unique capacities such as 127e support to our partners.

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

We can, and must always strive to, improve on our methods for coordination and effective collaboration with those who have primacy in intelligence, law enforcement, diplomacy, financial matters, information activities, and oversight. We have learned much and applied those lessons in coordination over the past 17 years, and have seen advances in collaborative operations and assessments. Operation GALLANT PHOENIX is an example of a U.S.-led, multinational effort to illuminate and identify VEOs and Foreign Terrorist Fighter (FTF) networks. It includes multiple federal agencies and U.S. allies who collaborate to counter VEOs and FTFs and provides a positive example of U.S. Government interagency and international counterterrorism cooperation.

What is your assessment of the threat posed by ISIS, al-Qaeda, and associated forces to the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests more broadly?

ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliates still present a lessened, but viable threat, to the U.S. homeland and an enduring significant threat to U.S. interests and our Allies and partners in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Our aggressive counter-terrorism (CT) operations, combined with the CT efforts of our allies and local partners, have successfully reduced the threat of sophisticated, large-scale external attacks on the homeland from both ISIS and al Qaeda. We do believe that conducting such attacks remains an important component of both ISIS and al Qaeda's strategies and that they will attempt to develop the capability to conduct such attacks if pressure is lessened. Although ISIS and al Qaeda's ability to attack the U.S. homeland is diminished, we need to remain particularly vigilant to ISIS's efforts to recruit and inspire homegrown violent extremists. ISIS and al Qaeda both retain operational networks across the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa that conduct regular high-profile attacks and continue to present a high threat to our regional interests.

Which terrorist organizations, in your view, pose the greatest threat to U.S. interests?

ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliates present the greatest threat to both the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests globally; both groups and their networks are actively conducting efforts to carry out attacks against U.S. interests around the world. VEOs associated with Iran, such as Lebanese Hizballah, and several Shia militant groups in Iraq present a significant potential threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East. In Africa, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, JNIM (Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin), and several ISIS affiliates are regional threats to stability, partner nation security, and U.S. personnel and interests. The instability caused by these groups are a direct threat to the partner nations' security and their ability to govern. This threat perpetuates safe havens and economic opportunities for these VEO groups.

Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

In August 2016, the Unified Campaign Plan was updated to assign USSOCOM a new leading role in coordinating DOD's efforts to counter WMDs, a mission previously assigned to U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM). Under its new responsibilities, USSOCOM is charged with synchronizing the Department's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction.

What is your understanding of USSOCOM's responsibilities under the Unified Campaign Plan for synchronizing the Department's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction?

USSOCOM performs three functions associated with the Coordinating Authority role--planning, assessing, and making recommendations to the Chairman and Secretary of Defense. Upon assuming the mission, USSOCOM was tasked to develop a Department Functional Campaign Plan for CWMD (FCP-CWMD) on behalf of the Secretary of Defense.

In your assessment are there any resources, authorities, or organizational changes needed to better execute USSOCOM's CWMD mission?

From what I have observed as the Joint Staff J5, USSOCOM is adequately resourced to perform the Coordinating Authority role for the CWMD mission area tasked in the Unified Command Plan. USSOCOM has reorganized to support the Coordinating Authority role for CWMD, using the manpower and resources provided as a result of the mission transfer from USSTRATCOM. If confirmed, I will continue to review and assess the CWMD requirements and certainly recommend changes, in close coordination with both ASDs (SO/LIC) and (HD&GS), via the Chairman to the Secretary on resources, authorities, and organization if required for the mission.

10 U.S.C. 127e Operations

Section 127e of Title 10, United States Code, 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. SOF to combat terrorism.

What is your assessment of this authority?

127e continues to be a critical enabler for our forces executing counterterrorism operations. It allows small-footprint SOF elements to take advantage of the skills and unique attributes of indigenous regular and irregular forces--local area knowledge, ethnicity, and language skills--to achieve effects that are critical to our mission objectives while mitigating risk to U.S. forces. This is especially true in remote or politically-sensitive areas where larger U.S. formations are infeasible or the enemy leverages safe havens that are otherwise inaccessible to SOF. The use of 127e authority has directly resulted in the disruption of terrorist networks and their activities and denied them operating space across a wide range of operating environments, at a fraction of the cost of other programs.

If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate 127e proposals to ensure they comply with policy guidance, are complementary to other DOD and U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts, and achieve their intended purpose?

Proposals for the use of 127e authority must be focused on the accomplishment of specific GCC strategic objectives via the operational activity of discreet surrogates or partner forces, consistent with SECDEF-granted operational authority and priorities based upon threat to the homeland. Proposals must be coordinated with interagency partners and include a well-defined end state,

envisioned measures of performance, off-ramp plan, and a viable counter-intelligence screening and assessment plan to ensure integrity of the enabled partnered force.

Irregular Warfare

Nation states are becoming more aggressive in challenging U.S. interests through the use of asymmetric means that often fall below the threshold of conventional conflict, commonly referred to as irregular warfare and “gray zone operations.”

What is your understanding of the threat to U.S. interests posed by adversaries in this domain of warfare?

The threat to U.S. interests posed by adversaries employing irregular techniques and hybrid warfare strategies includes near-peer competitor nations. The prospects of major power conflict combined with aggressive regional challengers are linked by the growing prevalence of conflict or competition below the level of armed conflict. The means of such conflict range from strong-arm diplomacy and economic coercion, to media manipulation and cyberattacks, to use of paramilitaries and proxy forces. Singularly, or in combination, these actions could serve to drain American resources and those of our allies and partners. Irregular Warfare conducted by our adversaries are often shrouded in deception or misinformation, making attribution difficult and thus possibly diluting the potential U.S. response.

What should be the guiding principles of the Department of Defense’s strategy to counter these threats?

Our guiding principles to counter these threats should include recognizing first and foremost that warfare has and will always consist of both traditional and irregular elements that cannot be separated, and then build our strategies accordingly. Secretary Mattis has emphasized the Department’s focus on countering such coercive behavior while also preparing to deter and if necessary defeat conventional aggression. This effort includes significant focus on growing the ability to work with other U.S. government agencies and departments, allies and partners, non-governmental organizations, and private entities to advance the Nation’s priorities and interests.

What role should special operations forces have in executing such a strategy?

SOF are best utilized in areas which are politically sensitive, where a large U.S. presence is unacceptable, or in missions that involve imparting high-end skills to critical partner forces. In short, SOF can offer asymmetric options to compete with adversaries’ asymmetric strategies and achieve outcomes short of armed conflict.

SOF must leverage its position at the tip of the spear. By embracing the principles of mission command to maintain peak agility, SOF can shape developments favorably in a rapidly changing strategic environment. SOF can adapt to disturbances to improve the position of the U.S., seeking to both exploit emerging opportunities when presented and to cultivate future

opportunities. SOF can provide insight and understanding from its forward position to better inform the Joint Force and interagency.

Section 1202 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations by U.S. special operations forces to combat terrorism.

What is your assessment of this authority?

The enactment of Section 1202 filled a gap in the fiscal authorities available to our forces at a critical juncture for SOF vis-à-vis current NDS priorities. SOF will now be able to operationalize select regular and irregular forces whose unique access and capabilities we can then leverage to achieve critical effects in support of SECDEF directed GCC missions. 1202-resourced efforts will support other GCC operations and activities involving peer competitor nations. Recognizing the strategic implications for this authority, we will move forward deliberately, in coordination with interagency partners, while providing full transparency to Congress.

If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate section 1202 proposals to ensure they comply with policy guidance, are complementary to other DOD and U.S. Government irregular warfare efforts, and achieve their intended purpose?

If confirmed, I will ensure that 1202 program proposals are consistent with Congressional intent, and that they are well collaborated and coordinated with interagency partners. Proposals must reflect detailed counterintelligence planning to ensure integrity of the enabled force, and they must include a well-defined end state with measures of performance. Proposals will include risk assessment/mitigation strategies that identify friction points and implement control measures to avoid inadvertent escalation or unintended consequences. Lastly, they must include off-ramp / demobilization strategies to be implemented should the strategic objectives be achieved or deemed unachievable.

Information Operations

The Department of Defense released a Strategy for Operations in the Information Environment in June 2016.

In your view, are the Department and the broader interagency appropriately organized to compete with state and non-state adversaries in the information environment? If not, what recommendations would you make?

The Department of Defense has conducted initial analysis of our force structure, authorities, and standing capabilities in order to meet our Nation's requirements to compete in the information environment. This has resulted in several new initiatives across the Joint Staff, the Services and at USSOCOM. One initiative is the Global Messaging/Counter Messaging Center, renamed as the Joint MISO Webops Center (JMWC). We believe this will improve upon existing capabilities

found at the Joint Force to compete in the information environment. If confirmed, I will look at how USSOCOM and the JMWC can contribute to a broader USG effort.

What is the appropriate role of the Department and, specifically, special operations forces in the broader information operations and strategic communications efforts of the U.S. Government?

The appropriate role for the Department in the broader USG information operations effort is in support of the lead agencies for strategic communications as designated in the threat strategies. In most cases, communication efforts take place outside declared areas of hostility with the Department of State and the Global Engagement Center as the designated leads. Within this construct, each of the GCCs, in coordination with relevant regional Assistant Secretary of State and with the assistance of the Director of the Global Engagement Center, develop a regional information strategy and interagency coordination plan for carrying out the strategy. In a broader sense, the Department is emphasizing throughout the force that every operation, action, and investment planned has an accompanying informational component. Every action we take conveys an idea and we must ensure consistency between our actions and our stated ideals and principles.

As directed in the Unified Command Plan and Section 167, Title 10 USC, USSOCOM is the Department's SOF Joint Force Provider with the responsibility to provide combat-ready SOF, including MISO forces. In doing so, we continue to build and modernize our MISO force to support achievement of GCCs' objectives. Outside of areas of hostilities, MISO forces work in close coordination with Department of State and other interagency personnel to ensure operations are in line with USG information objectives and consistent with State Department's Mission Strategic Plans.

Do you believe that USSOCOM's military information support capabilities can be more effectively utilized? If so, are there doctrinal, organizational, training, or authorities modifications that you believe could make military information support capabilities more effective?

Yes, USSOCOM's MISO capabilities can be more effectively utilized. Our MISO capabilities are most often used to convey focused information to select target audiences via various mediums of communication (e.g., radio, the Internet, television). An often overlooked capability our MISO force provides is the nuanced planning input MISO operators can provide to Joint Force Commanders. MISO operators can assist Commanders in developing plans designed to not only accomplish the mission at hand, but to do so in a way that takes the information environment into account and mitigates any negative perception of the U.S.

There are modifications USSOCOM could make to the MISO force to make it more effective. In response to the FY19 NDAA, Section 1065b, USSOCOM, in close coordination with ASD (SO/LIC), is conducting a detailed end-to-end study of the MISO force and its current capabilities. The purpose of this study is to identify necessary changes across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities and policy (DOTMLPF-P) spectrum that will make the MISO force more effective in today's challenging information

environment. While USSOCOM has made some necessary changes and is exploring emerging technologies, the end-to-end study will provide a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the MISO force.

Are there additional military capabilities that should be developed by the Department to more effectively compete in the information environment?

Yes, there are underdeveloped and undeveloped capabilities that apply in the information environment. Currently, there is no Department-wide internet-based information operations capability. Because of this shortfall, USSOCOM was given coordinating authority and directed to establish the JMWC. The JMWC will be a valuable resource allowing the Department to strategically compete in all GCCs with regard to internet-based influence operations.

The private sector is on the leading edge of technology with regards to information, where progress occurs rapidly and is ever-changing. Due to the highly competitive nature of the information environment, there are opportunities for cooperation and adoption of private sector capabilities to ensure we can compete in the future. Developing and applying artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities in the information environment will assist in developing dynamic and timely information postures that resonate well with our partners, while clearly diminishing the effectiveness of our adversaries messaging operations.

USSOCOM Acquisition Authorities

USSOCOM is unique within the DOD as the only unified command with acquisition authorities and funding. Further, the Commander of USSOCOM is the only uniformed commander with a subordinate senior acquisition executive.

If confirmed, how would you ensure USSOCOM requirements are adequately vetted and balanced against available resources before moving forward with an acquisition program?

If confirmed, I would ensure that USSOCOM requirements are fully coordinated with the Joint Staff and the Services to focus the command's resources on only those requirements that are truly Special Operations-peculiar. For those programs, I will continue the Commander-driven process of my predecessor where he reviewed requirements and prioritized resources against those requirements and ensured full transparency of how we allocated those resources with the Department and the Congressional Committees.

In your view, are there ways in which the USSOCOM acquisition system can be reformed to more expeditiously address emerging requirements?

It is critical that we continuously evolve USSOCOM's acquisition system to ensure it can support the evolving operational environment and pace of SOF operations. It is critical that USSOCOM retain its flexibility to tailor the more traditional DoD acquisition processes to respond rapidly to emerging battlefield requirements. Congress has provided many acquisition authorities over the past few years, many of which were not initially provided to USSOCOM. ASD(SO/LIC) and USSOCOM have successfully worked with OSD leadership to add all needed acquisition

authorities to USSOCOM, and recommended to Congress [ref FY2018 NDAA Section 809 Report] that all future authorities that Congress establishes to improve Defense Acquisition be provided to the SOF Enterprise as well as the Services. I will continue to seek those authorities that add value for USSOCOM in coordination with ASD (SO/LIC).

What role can USSOCOM's development and acquisition activities play in broader service and DOD efforts?

There is a symbiotic relationship between USSOCOM's activities and the Services, Agencies, and OSD. SOF relies on the Services for those major platform acquisitions better suited for their infrastructure, scope, and breadth. SOF enjoys a size and scale that allows for greater agility, especially in the development phase, that often leads the DoD in defining and developing solutions to capabilities that begin as SOF-peculiar but over time transition to the Services. Continuing our current processes to coordinate and collaborate early and often with all of our counterparts ensures these transitions occur deliberately and timely.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that special operations capabilities and requirements are integrated into overall DOD research, development, and acquisition programs?

If confirmed, I would continue full transparency of not only the developments USSOCOM is pursuing but also the capabilities we are seeking to partner on. For capabilities, this transparency is facilitated by our relationship with the Joint Staff through their requirements evaluation process and annual review of Combatant Command priorities. USSOCOM also conducts annual Service-to-SOF talks with the respective Service Chiefs to review items of mutual interest. To ensure high level visibility of our programs and processes, we intend to continue semi-annual SOF Acquisition Summits with USD (A&S), the Joint Staff, and the Service Acquisition Executives.

If confirmed, what metrics will you use to determine the effectiveness of USSOCOM technology development investments and whether USSOCOM is investing sufficient resources in these efforts?

If confirmed, I will review the USSOCOM processes and assessments for technology development as well as the resource allocation to ensure these investments will meet the future capabilities called for in the National Defense Strategy. That process must include feedback from our SOF operators that provide unique perspective based on their extensive combat experience, and high levels of training and education. These operators provide arguably the most effective feedback on how well the equipment we provide supports them in current operations. This must be balanced up against what we are likely to need in a future conflict.

If confirmed, how will you ensure that USSOCOM has an acquisition workforce with the skills, qualifications, and experience needed to develop and manage its acquisition and research and development programs?

If confirmed, I will empower the USSOCOM Acquisition Executive to continue to recruit, train, and retain a workforce with a SOF Acquirer mindset. I intend to support the recently instituted

USSOCOM training course for newly assigned acquisition professionals. This course acclimates them to the idiosyncrasies of conducting acquisition in a combatant command environment. Additionally, I will work with the Services to continue to assign their best acquisition officers to meet the demands of the SOF acquisition mission.

Stress on the Force and Families

In recent years, special operations forces have experienced high suicide rates and continue to face significant numbers of divorces. USSOCOM has focused significant effort and resources on addressing the stress on special operators and their families through the Preservation of the Force and Families initiative.

What is your understanding of the Preservation of the Force and Families initiative?

I consider preserving the force and families a top priority. The success of any mission depends on our people. I view the broader POTFF program as a wise and sound investment that contributes to readiness. The last four USSOCOM Commanders have placed heavy emphasis on POTFF for good reason. POTFF was initiated to meet the needs of the force and families experiencing pressures of a high tempo of training and combat operations in the years following the attacks on 9/11. The same pressures exist today, but due to the POTFF programs designed to develop mental, physical, spiritual, and social fitness, we are better suited to address these challenges.

If confirmed, how would you seek to address issues associated with the stress of difficult and repeated deployments on special operators and their families?

If confirmed, I intend to continue the efforts of my predecessors by maintaining sustainable personnel and operational tempos that provide predictability to the force and their families. I will also ensure that USSOCOM continues to promote the psychological, physical, social, and spiritual well-being of the force and their families by embedding professional staff (e.g., behavioral health providers, physical therapists, nutritionists, etc.) organic to our formations where they are accepted as trusted and accessible members of the team. This factor is crucial to the development of well-being as a preventative measure to face adversity and when necessary rapid recovery.

How do you define “special operations-unique” challenges to special operators and their families?

The Special Operations community is unique in that its personnel are more likely to be married, older, and generally experienced. They are expected to be mature and meet exceptionally high ethical and readiness standards. SOF and their families face consistently high personnel tempo and short notice deployments that are unique in both scope and mission requirements. Many of USSOCOM’s forces are geographically isolated and have sensitive mission sets that limit their ability to seek support outside of the unit. It is important that we have systems in place that keep our forces in the fight and return them to duty quickly when they experience illnesses and

injuries. With Congress' help, USSOCOM has been able to help mitigate some of these unique challenges. The command's Human Performance Programs help SOF personnel train smarter and rehabilitate faster when they are injured resulting in a force more capable of meeting operational demands and sustaining a career in SOF.

The Services and DoD provide a host of excellent family readiness, spiritual, behavioral health, and fitness programs, and we will continue to leverage those programs while working to fulfill gaps and meet unique requirements. USSOCOM has made tremendous strides in meeting the needs of their Service Members and their families, and if confirmed, I will continue to build on that foundation. I am appreciative of the Congressional authority afforded to USSOCOM to conduct family programs and will use this authority to provide tailored and responsive programs to meet the needs of SOF members and their families.

Recruiting and Retention

What are the biggest challenges to retention you see in the USSOCOM community?

I have no visibility currently of any challenges to SOF retention at this time. However, if confirmed, I will look at all the retention programs across USSOCOM's Service Components to ensure that they remain satisfactory to meet the demands of the force. It is clear that command involvement, robust incentives, and special pays must be in place to maintain the SOF formations and meet operational requirements in the aggregate.

What steps need to be taken, in your view, to meet the recruiting and retention goals of each of the services' SOF?

If confirmed, recruiting and retention will remain among USSOCOM's highest personnel priorities. Due to the long timelines needed to generate and train Special Operations personnel, it is crucial that USSOCOM put its best efforts into ensuring that we get the right people up front to enter SOF and then follow up by seeing to the continued growth and well-being of our SOF and their families. Having the right mix of programs, incentives, and compensation helps maintain the experience base and the personnel necessary to ensure successful mission execution.

Also, I will look for opportunities to emphasize that all Americans who have the courage and fortitude to challenge themselves in our assessment and selection arenas will find an environment that is fair and equitable. Anyone who demonstrates the physical, intellectual, professional, and character attributes required for mission accomplishments in the SOF operating environment will find a welcome place in SOF ranks. Special operations benefit from a diversity that provides access, insight, and perspective unavailable from a homogenous force. We must rely on a wide range of exceptional people to be combat effective and to address the complex security challenges we face.

Furthermore, it is imperative that USSOCOM continue to emphasize and fund total Service member and family wellness. This includes destigmatizing behavioral health care. The welfare of our service members and their families are critical to our command's readiness and our ability to

accomplish the mission. USSOCOM demands absolute commitment from its people and in return have an obligation to provide the best care, education, equipment, and training to them. USSOCOM must continue to work with the Services to execute innovative programs to meet unique operator and family needs to ensure SOF not only attracts the best, but also retains the operational experience, expertise, and capability necessary to meet national security requirements.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

In your view, what would be the impact of requiring a judge advocate outside the chain of command, instead of a military commander in the grade of O-6 or above as is currently the Department's policy, to determine whether allegations of sexual assault should be prosecuted?

I support the Department's current policy. The Uniform Code of Military Justice operates as both a criminal justice system and a critical component of a commander's authority to maintain good order and discipline. I believe our military members and national security will best be served by retaining the military commander's key role in the military justice decision process. I value the legal analyses and recommendations provided by our highly proficient judge advocates. If confirmed, I fully expect my legal team, both uniformed and civilian, to provide unbiased recommendations based solely on the facts of each case. While I firmly believe the military commander's role is indispensable in the prosecutorial process, I will, in all cases, take the greatest advantage of the expertise of the assigned judge advocate team.

What is your assessment of the problem of sexual assaults in USSOCOM?

I have been briefed that USSOCOM sexual assault reporting rates continue to trend below Service averages. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize that sexual harassment and assault are unacceptable behaviors in all circumstances. Although evidence indicates a lower rate of sexual assault in the USSOCOM enterprise than in the Department at large, so long as sexual assault continues to occur anywhere in SOF, I will endeavor to eradicate this crime.

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

Establishing an appropriate culture where victims are treated with dignity and respect starts at the top. Commanders are accountable for what happens in their units and they set the leadership tone. Commanders are crucial to our ability to effect institutional change and leaders at all levels must foster a command climate where sexist behavior, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are criminal, unacceptable, and addressed immediately.

What is your assessment of current sexual assault prevention and response policies and procedures in USSOCOM?

I believe USSOCOM's efforts to prevent these crimes are proving effective in reducing incidents and increasing reporting. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Services to

improve investigation of and response to sexual assault, ensuring USSOCOM and Service resources provide timely support--medical, psychological, and investigative--to victims of sexual assault.

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

The ability for victims to choose between restricted and unrestricted reporting is critical. The choice represents a balance between taking care of victims and prosecuting offenders. We continue to see a higher proportion of victims converting their reports from restricted to unrestricted, which may be an indicator that victims are continuing to gain confidence in the sexual assault response process and military justice system. Allowing victims to file restricted reports provides the Department and commanders information to better understand the scope of the sexual assault problem, while also respecting a victim's privacy and providing access to medical care and support services.

Do you consider current sexual assault policies and procedures, particularly those on restricted and unrestricted reporting, to be effective?

Based on the increase in reporting and the decrease in prevalence, I believe that the current sexual assault policies and procedures are increasingly effective. That victims are reporting via both the restricted and unrestricted options demonstrates the effectiveness. The continuing increase in unrestricted reports demonstrates confidence in the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources USSOCOM has in place to investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual assault?

My understanding is that USSOCOM receives excellent support as they work with the military Services for training sexual assault response personnel to ensure they are well-trained to investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual assault. If confirmed, I will ensure improved training for investigators is also a priority and this includes investigative resources in deployed areas. I believe the DoD training network in place now prepares investigators and prosecutors to handle sexual assault cases in a caring, responsive, and professional manner. Our ability to respond and support victims is critical.

USSOCOM reports sexual assault allegations to Service law enforcement for investigation. Some USSOCOM units have assigned Service-provided military law enforcement that operate under Service supervision. Others have a supporting military law enforcement agency that investigates the allegations. Both arrangements provide adequate investigative support. The Services are responsible for training sexual assault response personnel to ensure they are well-trained to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. With respect to prosecution, we work through our SOF Service Components for prosecution of sexual assault cases. Our Joint commands receive prosecution support through support agreements depending on the Service of the accused. Accordingly, our prosecution support is consistent with that of the Services. Our ability to respond and support victims is critical.

What is your view of the adequacy of resources and programs in USSOCOM to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

My understanding is that victim care is a top priority within USSOCOM. If confirmed, I will work closely with the military Services to ensure sexual assault care providers (Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, medical and mental health providers, and legal counsel) are well-trained to support victims of sexual assault.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in providing necessary support to victims of sexual assault?

Supporting victims of sexual assault is a leadership responsibility and priority. Commanders at all levels must remain committed to ensuring victims receive the support they deserve. If any barriers are encountered, I expect commanders to take the lead in resolving them.

What additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to address the problem of sexual assaults in USSOCOM?

I will ensure that commanders and all in USSOCOM understand that prevention is the foremost goal, that sexual assault is a crime, that assistance to and advocacy for victims are crucial, and that reporting and response to sexual assault are priorities for each of us.

What is your assessment of the effect, if any, of recent legislation concerning sexual assault on the capability of USSOCOM commanders to prosecute sexual assault cases?

The Military Justice Act of 2016 significantly updated the military justice system. These changes will come into effect on 1 January 2019. I am optimistic that these changes will provide commanders with improved tools to ensure good order and discipline and hold offenders accountable. Changes such as the specific criminalization of retaliation against crime victims and modifications to the UCMJ Article on sexual assault will provide valuable capabilities in the fight against sexual assault.

Surveys report that up to 62 percent of victims who report a sexual assault perceive professional or social retaliation for reporting.

If confirmed, what will you do to address the issue of retaliation for reporting a sexual assault?

First, retaliation goes against our core values and has no place in our military. Second, if confirmed, I will ensure that the culture of SOF is one of respect and that retaliation is not tolerated in any form, especially among peers.

Sexual assault is a significantly underreported crime in our society and in the military. If confirmed, what will you do to increase reporting of sexual assaults by military victims?

In order to increase reporting of sexual assaults by military victims, we must improve victim confidence in our ability to respond to incidents of sexual assault. We must also continue to reinforce a climate in which victims are treated with belief, dignity, and respect, and where any form of retaliation or reprisal is unequivocally unacceptable. If confirmed, I will continue to partner with the Services to assess current programs and develop initiatives to enhance support services and improve our systems to hold perpetrators appropriately accountable.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

Do you believe that gender neutral occupational standards for USSOCOM occupations have been set appropriately?

I have been briefed that USSOCOM utilized physiology and occupational standard experts to review the entry, training, and graduation standards for the training pipelines. All standards were validated as operationally relevant and directly related to actions required during Special Operations missions. The challenging standards, applied appropriately by training professionals, will continue to produce special operators who are ready to succeed in the vital, challenging missions our Nation requires. All SOF Component Commands have processes in place to ensure all occupational standards are reviewed and re-validated at an interval not greater than three years. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate these standards to ensure that they remain relevant to the actions required for Special Operations missions.

Civil Affairs Operations

In your view, does USSOCOM have sufficient personnel, authorities, and resources to conduct the range of civil affairs missions required for today's operations?

The dynamic and evolving nature of our complex operating environment continues to place a strain on available Civil Affairs forces. If confirmed, I will prioritize the allocation of Civil Affairs resources where they are most needed.

If confirmed, how would you ensure civil affairs activities by special operations personnel are integrated into larger U.S. government efforts?

SOF Civil Affairs are deployed to 35 locations around the globe as part of the USSOCOM Civil Military Engagement program. Working as part of an interagency team they engage vulnerable populations susceptible to influence by VEOs through civil affairs operations. They are an integral part of the connective tissue between GCC campaign plans and other interagency objectives within a specific country or region. Our Nation's military is only one of the instruments of national power. Regardless of location, the actions of SOF Civil Affairs are synchronized with other interagency partners at the U.S. embassy country team level, and prior to deployment, with our interagency counterparts inside the National Capitol Region.

If confirmed, how would you ensure Civil Affairs and Military Information Support Operations are adequately coordinated to achieve a maximum impact?

As with other SOF capabilities, USSOCOM coordinates its activities through our TSOCs working in support of their respective GCC's theater campaign plans. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the use of coordinated civil affairs and MISO capabilities to our TSOC Commanders, and emphasize the need for coordinated pre-deployment training, where appropriate, to the Commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

Capabilities of Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces

What is your assessment of the mix of responsibilities assigned to general purpose and SOF, particularly with respect to security force assistance and building partner military capabilities?

Both SOF and conventional forces are capable and have supported these missions most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many conventional forces, like SOF, have units that are now regionally focused and have a thorough understanding of the culture and are able to build relationships with the partner nations military. SOF is best utilized in areas which are politically sensitive environments and where a large U.S. presence or a sizeable force is unacceptable to a host country government, while conventional forces are best suited for delivering conventional forces capabilities to foreign military forces in environments where U.S. presence is acceptable to the host-country government and where large-scale U.S. presence is considered necessary and acceptable by the host-country government.

Special Operations Enabling Capabilities

In your view, how should the responsibility for providing enabling capabilities for special operations missions be divided between USSOCOM and the services?

The 5th SOF truth is "Most Special Operations require non-SOF assistance." The current enabling force structure is sufficient to meet most SOF requirements. The majority of SOF enablers are capable to meet the requirements for short duration support for the SOF operator. However, during sustained operations, SOF must rely on theater provided Service enablers to meet their support requirements.

How would you ensure that the enabler requirements of special operations forces are appropriately communicated to and receive support from the services?

The current Joint Staff Global Force Management Process provides the appropriate means to communicate Special Operations requirements for Service support. However, this area could be improved by ensuring full use of the in-place system to link requirements, and their resourcing, for visibility. I would emphasize full use of this capability to enable supported and supporting commanders to identify requirements that are fully or under resourced. I would also, as needed, leverage the Special Operations Policy and Oversight Council to address support concerns with the Services. Finally, ASD (SO/LIC), with his Service Secretary-like responsibilities, is

uniquely positioned to be USSOCOM's advocate for Service support. If confirmed, I will work with ASD and his staff to support their engagements with the Services.

Do you believe USSOCOM and the services are maintaining adequate enabling capabilities to support special operations missions?

USSOCOM maintains adequate enabling force structure to support initial entry operations in accordance with doctrine. Additionally, USSOCOM's low-density enabling forces are sufficient to support a limited number of longer-term operations in austere environments. However, USSOCOM's force structure is challenged to simultaneously support both long-term requirements in mature environments and a large number of small-scale operations in austere environments.

The Services' enabling capabilities are designed to deploy as units and support larger formations and operations. They are challenged to break unit integrity to support small-scale operations in austere environments and maintain readiness for major OPLAN execution.

Supported Combatant Command

Under certain circumstances and subject to direction by the President or Secretary of Defense, USSOCOM may operate as a supported combatant command.

In your view, under what circumstances should USSOCOM conduct operations as a supported combatant command?

USSOCOM has not historically been the supported combatant command for operations, with the exception of several compartmented operations. Rather, it provides specialized forces capabilities to the GCCs in pursuit of national objectives. Even our most high-end forces are typically put under the operational control of the GCC Commanders to execute missions of national importance. As far as supported/supporting roles between the combatant commands are concerned, there are generally no circumstances under which USSOCOM would need to be the supported commander for operations. The GCCs have the overall military responsibility within their areas, integrating the spectrum of military operations and activities.

In your view, what resource, organization, and force structure changes, if any, are required in order for USSOCOM to more effectively conduct both supporting and supported combatant command responsibilities?

In my capacity as the Joint Staff Director of Strategy Plans and Policy, I am not aware of any resourcing, organizational, or force structure changes required at USSOCOM. If confirmed, I will undertake an examination of USSOCOM to evaluate and determine if USSOCOM is resourced and organized to effectively carryout its mission for the Department and the Nation.

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.

Yes

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 the Commander of USSOCOM?

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

Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?

Yes

If confirmed again, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman?

Yes