

**Nomination Hearing
For Reappointment to the Grade of General
and to be Commander, United States Central Command
Written Statement**

Mr. Chairman, Senator McCain, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to have been nominated by the President to serve as the Commander of United States Central Command. If confirmed, I will apply my experience and pledge my best efforts and my candid assessments in this position.

CONTINUITY OF LEADERSHIP

I wish to acknowledge General Petraeus and to express my appreciation for the selfless service that he exemplifies. He, his wife Holly, and his family have made endless sacrifices in our country's service.

General Petraeus and I share a similar view of the region. We have served together repeatedly: in the Pentagon; fighting together in Iraq; jointly developing the counterinsurgency manual when he was at Fort Leavenworth and I was at Quantico; and as fellow combatant commanders.

I would also like to acknowledge that there has been no loss of momentum since General Petraeus left CENTCOM as LtGen John Allen continues to do superb work as the Acting Commander of U.S. Central Command. John has been a steady hand during this period of transition, resolutely continuing our regional strategy and reassuring our partners that there will be no change in our relationships with them.

CONSISTENCY IN OUR APPROACH

If I am confirmed as CENTCOM Commander, I will carry out a strategy that is consistent with the strategy currently in place. Our troops, our regional partners, and our adversaries alike should know that CENTCOM's leadership has changed, but our mission and activities have not. The CENTCOM team has generated a great deal of momentum, and if confirmed, I intend to sustain and strengthen what the team has set in motion.

HARMONY IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS

The wars we are fighting require highly integrated civilian-military efforts from the highest to the lowest levels. I will work in tandem with General Petraeus, General Odierno, General Austin, and the other military and civilian members of the President's National Security Team, as well as our many international partners in the region and around the world. If confirmed, my duty will be to pursue harmony in our civil-military relationships, to represent the needs of our

commanders, and to ensure our military and civilian leaders are fully resourced in a coherent and comprehensive manner.

VIEW OF THE REGION: CLEAR-EYED/NO ILLUSIONS

Consistency in our approach and harmony in our relationships are vital because we face immense challenges in a region vital to our national interests and those of our partners. I will listen, learn and understand the region's people and its leaders, finding opportunities in league with their interests to achieve broader objectives for stability, economic progress, and a better future. In the midst of the harsh realities in this vital region, there are also opportunities to work with responsible, moderate elements, and I will be eager to do so.

The Central Command region also includes elements that are irreconcilable, part of a movement that is intent on carrying out attacks on innocent civilians worldwide, including the 9/11 attack on American soil that killed three thousand from over 90 countries; the 10/12/02 bombing in Bali, Indonesia that killed 202 and injured 209; the 3/11/04 train bombing in Madrid, Spain that killed 191 and injured 1,800; the 7/7/05 subway bombing in London, England that killed 52 and injured 700; the 11/26/08 coordinated hotel attacks in Mumbai, India that killed 166 and injured 308, among many other failed and successful attacks worldwide. In the Central Command region, the enemy has carried out attacks that have killed thousands, the vast majority of them Muslims.

Our enemies' practices of targeting civilians offer us opportunities to counter their extremist ideology. Those who adopt terror as a way of war repeatedly make the mistake of revealing their disregard for human life and alienating the population whose support they need to operate. We and our Coalition and regional partners, by contrast, are involved in the noble cause of helping to realize a brighter future in the region. We are the good guys. We're not perfect; regrettably, we make mistakes about which we are candid and constantly strive to correct, but we are the ones working to reopen schools, to build roads, to provide electricity, and to offer new hope. As the President stated during his inaugural address, "We will not apologize for our way of life, nor will we waver in its defense. And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, we say to you, now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken—you cannot outlast us, and we will defeat you."

MOST PRESSING MISSION: SUPPORT TO AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

If confirmed, my immediate priority will be the campaign in Afghanistan. The border zone between Afghanistan and Pakistan is home to a syndicate of extremists that includes Al Qaeda, whose leaders conducted the initial planning for the 9/11 attacks from Kandahar before going on to U.S. flight schools. Afghanistan and Pakistan are two countries of critical interest to our national security, to that of the region, and to all nations. These active theaters comprise

a regional whole, for while they require differing operational approaches (with the character of our assistance adapted to the situation in each country), the extremists who traverse that border are threats to the people on both sides.

AFGHANISTAN

The issues we currently face in Afghanistan are familiar to me. I fought there in November 2001, less than three months after the 9/11 attacks. From 2006 to 2007, I was Commander of Marine Corps Forces Central Command under General Abizaid and Admiral Fallon. From 2007 to 2009, I wore U.S. and NATO hats, leading U.S. Joint Forces Command and NATO's Allied Command Transformation, requiring me to directly support operations in Afghanistan and to work closely with NATO Allies and Coalition partners.

In Afghanistan today, the insurgency has proven to be resilient, while Afghan state institutions, decimated by decades of war, are struggling to develop, provide security, and deliver services to the Afghan people. These institutions are developing in the face of a murderous enemy who knows its empty message cannot win at the ballot box and thus must resort to violently intimidating the populace. Since 2008, the enemy's indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) alone has killed 1,992 Afghan civilians and injured 4,110 others. Moreover, over a large period since 2004 IEDs have killed 2,267 U.S., Coalition, and Afghan National Security Forces and wounded 7,825. These numbers reflect the enormous sacrifices our nation, our partners in Afghanistan, and the Afghans themselves are making for this effort and I am deeply aware of these costs.

DEFINING THE MISSION

We have a clear mission in Afghanistan, as articulated by our President, who said, "We will not tolerate a safe haven for terrorists who want to destroy Afghan security from within and launch attacks against innocent men, women, and children in our country and around the world." Specifically, the President said, "to meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al Qaeda a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And, we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future." The mission is consistent with the hopes of the overwhelming majority of the Afghan people who have faced cruel times for too long. Implementing the military component of our strategy there – by assiduously protecting the Afghan people; of helping to pragmatically build Afghanistan; and of relentlessly pursuing those who seek to kill and destroy– is sound and it requires firm execution. I support it fully.

DEFINING WINNING

And I believe that by steadfastly executing our strategy we will succeed in enabling Afghanistan. Success in Afghanistan means that we are making progress in enabling the Afghan Government to take the lead in preventing its people from being abused by extremists and Afghan territory from again being used for destabilizing the region and exporting terror to the world. The key line of effort for us is building Afghan National Security Forces that are capable of standing against internal and external threats with only modest international support – so that Al Qaeda and other transnational extremists cannot once again establish sanctuaries from which they can launch attacks on our homeland or on our allies. This vision must be achieved in parallel with efforts to help Afghans make progress toward their longer-term aspirations to build their economy, infrastructure, and capacity to govern.

We all know achieving our goals in Afghanistan requires the enduring commitment of the international community. As outlined in the 2010 National Security Strategy of the United States, the challenges such as those found in Afghanistan cannot be solved by any one nation alone – it requires the sustained cooperation and contributions of many nations. Secretary Gates, Secretary Clinton, and NATO Secretary General Rasmussen have also articulated the same message. We are united in our enduring commitment to the mission in Afghanistan.

THE MEANING OF JULY 2011

It is equally important to recognize that Afghans want to have the lead in protecting themselves, and that we have no interest in being occupiers. President Karzai told the Kabul Conference last week that his objective is for Afghanistan to be responsible for all security responsibilities in 2014. In this context, I understand the July 2011 date that the President announced at West Point last December as the beginning of a transition of security tasks to the Afghans, based on conditions on the ground at that time, which will allow U.S. troops to begin returning home. Secretary Gates reaffirmed this last month when he said “the pace...with which we draw down and how many we draw down is going to be conditions-based.” The transition process will be more of a “thinning out” of Coalition forces as Afghan National Security Forces move into the lead. Forces may shift missions and be “reinvested” in other elements of the effort before they return home, and this transition will occur on the district level and in functional areas as well.

THE WAY AHEAD

Moving forward, we are working alongside the Afghans to reverse the momentum of the Taliban insurgency and to build the capabilities of the Afghan security forces, while investing in a civil-military campaign plan to improve the Afghan

Government's capacity to respond to the needs of its people. We are doing this with an uplift of 30,000 additional U.S. Forces – nearly 85 percent of which have arrived – and 9,700 additional forces from NATO and Coalition partners – about 71 percent of which have arrived. Once fully deployed, there will be more than 44,000 non-U.S. troops in Afghanistan, reinforcing the 243,000 soldiers and police in growing Afghan security forces, carrying out a variety of combat, training, logistics, and intelligence missions needed for success.

PROGRESS IN AFG

We have already seen that progress is being made in assisting the Afghan people. Under the Taliban, fewer than 900,000 boys – and no girls – were enrolled in Afghanistan's schools. As of January 2010, nearly 7 million children are enrolled in over 11,000 schools nation-wide; around 37% or 2.5 million are girls. There has also been an over eight-fold increase in the number of teachers to 170,000 – 30% of them are women. And as Chairman Levin recounted after a recent trip to Afghanistan, there is maturation in the Afghan National Army meeting its goals, with the Afghans increasingly shouldering a heavier burden in the fight, and partnered operations becoming the norm. The most visible evidence of this is in RC-Capital, where ANSF forces are in the lead patrolling in the streets of Kabul and establishing security rings within the city for the recent Consultative Peace Jirga and the successful Kabul Conference, the biggest high-level gathering ever in the capitol. In RC-South, the first fully Afghan-led operation occurred during Operation MALAJAT. This effort involved more than 550 Afghan and Coalition personnel tasked to search and secure approximately 10 square kilometers around MALAJAT, a community in Kandahar City.

Violence will remain amidst this progress, as the enemy chooses to fight intentionally among innocent people in a war “among the people.” The enemy is alarmed that they are losing momentum and is fighting back, as expected. Working in partnership with Afghan forces, ISAF will apply unrelenting pressure to further roll back the enemy and protect the people. A lot has been accomplished, and much remains to be done.

Nothing about this will be easy. I have witnessed the difficulties, the burdens, and the hopes carried by our troops, our coalition partners, and notably the Afghan people themselves. We will have some bad days ahead, but so long as we hold fast and adapt faster than the enemy, the enemy's situation will continue to worsen; it will become more desperate, continue to make mistakes, and turn the population against it. While reconcilable elements fold back into society, irreconcilable elements will be removed from it.

PAKISTAN

Inextricably linked to our campaign in Afghanistan is our strategic partnership with Pakistan. I am heartened by the Pakistanis' efforts in countering extremism

in their country, and I am reminded that the initial amphibious operation that I led into Afghanistan in November 2001 would not have been possible without their support. Today, the Pakistani people and their political parties have thrown tremendous weight behind military efforts to root out and destroy the Pakistani Taliban and other violent extremists, having increased the size of their forces committed to the fight in the FATA and Kyber-Pawktoon-Kwah to approximately 147,000, and retaking control over large sections of their territory that had been safe havens for our common enemies. Pakistan's Army and Frontier Corps have carried out increasingly effective and extensive operations in those parts of their country that have suffered under the Taliban and other violent extremist influence for many years, at the significant cost of more than 4,000 casualties since 2009. Clearly the Pakistan government, military, and people deserve our support, and I thank the Congress for its continuing support as we restore trust with our Pakistani counterparts, help them sustain their campaign against extremism, and deepen our partnership with this vital ally.

IRAQ

I have served in Iraq and seen first-hand the valor, adaptability and ethical performance of our troops as they have fought to earn the trust of an initially skeptical Iraqi people. Among my highest priorities if confirmed as CENTCOM Commander will be to enable the critical continuation of our responsible drawdown in Iraq. The drawdown of our forces to 50,000 by September 1st is on track, as are the withdrawal of our equipment and base closures. The shift from our combat mission to stability operations will go forward thanks to the combined efforts of our military, the Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people themselves, while our Department of State takes on a more long-term role in our relationship with Iraq. Our forces will soon be led in this effort by General Lloyd Austin, who was recently confirmed as our next commander in Iraq and is a trusted comrade, as we have served together several times since 2002 and fought alongside each other in Iraq. As with General Odierno, I have unbridled confidence in General Austin's leadership and I will work to set the broader conditions for his success.

Difficulties and challenges remain for Iraq. Although great progress has been made in Iraq, it is not yet enduring, primarily because many underlying sources of political instability have yet to be resolved. Nevertheless, the fact that security trends have remained positive over the past year in the context of a significant drawdown of U.S. forces is testament to the growing capabilities and professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces, who now lead in protecting the Iraqi population throughout the country. Their performance is particularly evident in this extended period of Iraqi Government formation, with enemy effectiveness continuing to decline, and the ISF serving as a protective windbreak between the Iraqi people and a merciless and increasingly desperate enemy. This combination of circumstances permits us to continue to responsibly draw down, thinning our lines over the coming year, and transitioning to a civilian-led, long-term, and mutually beneficial relationship between our two nations. I support

robust resourcing of the Iraqi Security Forces Fund, even as the Iraqis themselves commit 17% of their national budget to their own security and, as a result, cover the lion's share of total security costs. The Iraqis still need our help as they continue to build their capabilities in order to protect against malign external influences seeking to foment ethno-sectarian violence and distrust.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES

Beyond Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, there are several other significant challenges to our interests and the interests of our partners in the CENTCOM area.

IRAN

Iran presents the greatest long-term challenge in the region as it continues to threaten regional and global stability. Despite the promise of its rich cultural heritage and educated populace, the Iranian regime continues to ignore the true aspirations of its people and appears less interested in hiding its ambitions to pursue a nuclear-weapons capability, heightening global concerns over a nuclear arms race that would destabilize the region.

The Iranian regime also continues to challenge the authority of Iran's neighboring governments by funding, arming, and training militant proxies in the region, most notably in Iraq and Afghanistan. As General Odierno recently stated, these Iranian proxies continue to take advantage of our drawdown in Iraq by conducting attacks against our forces there, with the additional intent to intimidate and manipulate political outcomes inside Iraq. The Iranian regime has carried out these activities while violently suppressing the rights of its own citizens. The task of Central Command will be to counter the Iranian regime's destabilizing activities, to deter the regime from aggression, to forthrightly and prudently posture our forces, and to work in concert with our partners in the region to advance our shared interests. Our efforts need to back-stop the diplomatic and economic initiatives exercised by the UN and the international community, keeping a close eye on Iran's efforts to threaten and destabilize countries in the region.

AL QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA (AQAP)

Al Qaeda and the other extremist groups associated with it pose a threat that spans the CENTCOM region and requires a theater-wide response that applies constant pressure to all elements of the extremist network. Al Qaeda and its affiliates' growing challenge to stability in Yemen has made that country an area of emphasis for CENTCOM. Indeed, from locations in Yemen, AQAP has shown it has the intent to conduct attacks that threaten not just Yemen, but surrounding countries and the U.S. homeland. Yemen is also an example of what rapidly-applied assistance through joint civil-military efforts can do for a nation in need.

When Al Qaeda began exerting its influence in Yemen, our Ambassador and the Central Command team worked closely with President Saleh to come up with a plan to provide a range of assistance to the Yemenis. We must continue to forge closely supportive relations with the Yemenis and regional partners to ensure a sustained whole of governments approach against AQAP.

REGIONAL APPROACH

As we endeavor to address these cross-cutting and sub-regional challenges, I will carry forward an overall approach of assisting our partners in the region based on our shared interests. CENTCOM has made a great deal of progress in this respect and I will reinforce those efforts.

In the Gulf region, for example, our partners are involved in a variety of activities that are contributing to the region's security. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a powerful influence in the region. Moreover, the Kingdom's commitment to defeating Al Qaeda and its effective program for reintegration of dissidents serve as valuable models for other states in the region. The Kingdom, with our assistance, is also undertaking an effort to protect its critical infrastructure. We also have a strong security relationship with the United Arab Emirates, and we have expanded our partnerships with Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. Kuwait is a pivotal partner that has been instrumental in supporting our efforts in Iraq. Bahrain, as well, has been a gracious host of the U.S. fleet for decades, while at the same time Qatar has been host to one of our largest bases in the region and our forward headquarters. Oman has continued to be a valuable partner in preserving stability in the region. CENTCOM's Regional Security Architecture bolsters and connects these relationships, strengthening partner capabilities to address existing and emerging threats. Understanding the region's unique geopolitical realities and recognizing that our Gulf partners have much to offer, if confirmed I will work with them individually and collectively to sustain regional stability.

Similarly, in Central Asia, we have opened new and encouraging opportunities for engagement with Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan by cooperating to establish the Northern Distribution Network as a supply route to Afghanistan, which will also serve to further future economic integration and stability. Strengthening our relationships greatly aids our cooperation on other issues, such as counterterrorism and counternarcotics. In similar fashion, we are reaching out to Turkmenistan, advancing our partnerships in Central Asia, and doing so transparently to avoid any misunderstanding of our motives.

Elsewhere in the region, we must continue to strengthen our partnerships, building trust and national capabilities against terrorism through training, equipping, personnel exchanges and exercises. In Lebanon, we are working to build the critical capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, especially in counterterrorism. We have collaborated with the Kingdom of Jordan, having

established a world-class irregular warfare training center where many nations train. And Egypt continues to play a leadership role in the region by hosting the important multilateral Bright Star Exercise and conducting counterterrorism and counter-smuggling activities, besides remaining an intellectual center of gravity in the region.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

To complement these regional partnerships, CENTCOM also must recognize that none of its sub-regional challenges exists in a vacuum. Confronting each of them requires us to recognize that significant forces at work in the CENTCOM region originate from outside it. It is imperative to strengthen our understanding of these external elements and what they represent in terms of potential stabilizing influences. Turkey, Russia, and, increasingly, China and India exert major influences within the CENTCOM region. Similarly, the Middle East Peace Process, though it involves parties that are outside the CENTCOM region, has a significant impact upon the countries of the region and upon CENTCOM's ability to further our interests throughout the area. In addition, though on a smaller scale, we have seen an increasing impact in the region from the migration of extremists from Africa—whether from the Al Qaeda-affiliated Somali group Al Shabaab or out of Muslim Nigeria—into Yemen and AQAP training camps. Al Shabaab has shown recently the intent to carry out terrorist attacks beyond the Horn of Africa. Finally, the pirates who prey on shipping in the waters off of the coast of Africa are based in ports that lie beyond CENTCOM's boundaries. Addressing these dynamics will require CENTCOM to maintain a close working relationship with PACOM, EUCOM and AFRICOM, as well as other commands and agencies, and I pledge to do so.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE REGION

If confirmed by the Senate, I will leverage my experiences in the region over the last 30 years to advance the missions of the U.S. Central Command. I have had the privilege of serving in the Central Command area of responsibility many times, starting as a young officer in 1979 on a naval deployment to the North Arabian Sea. I have respect for the peoples in the region and for their cultures. I have been fortunate to develop personal relationships with several leaders in the region – military and civilian, plus U.S. and partner nations – for more than a decade, and I will expand those relationships to enhance the unity of effort and integrated harmony essential to success.

CLOSING

Having been nominated for this position, I am mindful of the extraordinary privilege it has been to serve for over 38 years alongside some of America's finest young men and women. These Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and civilians represent all that is great about our experiment in

democracy that we call America. They sacrifice daily in difficult environments to defend our freedoms when they are threatened, and I would like to express my appreciation and respect for their incredible dedication and skill. I will hold them foremost in my thoughts if you confirm me and I will also provide my best professional military assessment to this committee and to my leadership with their interests in mind.

I would also like to thank the Congress, and the members of this committee, in particular, for your support. I remain mindful of the inherited freedoms we share here today, thanks to the blood, sweat and tears of our predecessors. And, today, if confirmed, I pledge to give all that I have to build the strongest coalitions, the most agile forces and the most ethical defenders of our nation. We, too, have the same obligation as past generations of Americans to pass along these freedoms to our children.

In closing, I will reemphasize that I place a high priority on trust, unity of effort and harmony in protection of innocents from those who would attack them.

Thank you very much.