

**Advance Questions for General James N. Mattis, U.S. Marine Corps
Nominee for Commander, U. S. Central Command**

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the military departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?

The Department has made great progress in the joint arena since the enactment of Goldwater-Nichols. There is no room for complacency but I believe we're on the right track. I don't believe there is a need for any major modifications to the act.

If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?

Beyond Goldwater-Nichols, Congress may consider means to increase integration of non-military agencies in appropriate training and force readiness environments in order to build the foundation for more effective "whole of government" approaches to crisis prevention or crisis resolution.

Relationships

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Other sections of law and traditional practice, however, establish important relationships outside the chain of command. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), to the following officials:

The Secretary of Defense

Subject to direction from the President, the Commander, US Central Command performs duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense. In addition, the Commander, US Central Command is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the preparedness of the command to carry out its missions.

The Under Secretaries of Defense

Commander, US Central Command coordinates and exchanges information with the

Under Secretaries of Defense as needed to set and meet US Central Command priorities and requirements for support.

The Assistant Secretaries of Defense

Commander, US Central Command coordinates and exchanges information with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense as needed to set and meet US Central Command priorities and requirements for support.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President, National Security Council, and Secretary of Defense. Section 163 of title 10, US Code, allows communication between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the combatant commanders to flow through the Chairman. As is custom and traditional practice, and as instructed by the Unified Command Plan, I would communicate with the Secretary through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I anticipate a close dialogue with the Chairman on all significant matters.

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

I would communicate and coordinate with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as required and in the absence of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Director of the Joint Staff

I would also communicate and coordinate with the Director as necessary and expect the Deputy Commander, US Central Command or Chief of Staff, US Central Command would communicate regularly with the Director of the Joint Staff.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments

The Secretaries of the military departments are responsible for the administration and support of forces assigned to the combatant commands. Commander, US Central Command coordinates closely with the Secretaries to ensure that requirements to organize, train, and equip forces for Central Command are met.

The Service Chiefs

Commander, US Central Command communicates and exchanges information with the Service Chiefs to support their responsibility for organizing, training, and equipping forces. Successful execution of the US Central Command mission responsibilities requires close coordination with the Service Chiefs. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Service Chiefs to understand the capabilities of their Services to clearly communicate to them the CENTCOM theater's requirements and to ensure effective employment of the Services' capabilities in the joint and coalition execution of the US Central Command

mission.

The other combatant commanders

Commander, US Central Command maintains close relationships with the other combatant commanders. These relationships are critical to the execution of our National Military Strategy, and are characterized by mutual support, frequent contact, and productive exchanges of information on key issues. This is especially true of EUCOM, PACOM, and SOCOM.

The US Ambassador to Iraq

I would necessarily have a relationship with the US Ambassador to Iraq, in close coordination with the commander, United States Forces-Iraq, in order to ensure unity of effort between US military and all other US government activities in Iraq and in the CENTCOM region.

The US Ambassador to Afghanistan

I would necessarily have a close working relationship with the US Ambassador to Afghanistan, in close coordination with the US commander there, in order to ensure unity of effort between US military and all other US government activities in Afghanistan and in the CENTCOM region.

The U.S. Ambassadors to other countries within the Central Command area of operations

I would necessarily have a close working relationship with US Ambassadors to other countries in the CENTCOM region, in close coordination with defense representatives or defense attaches in each country, in order to ensure unity of effort between US military and other US government activities in the CENTCOM region.

Commander, Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I)

Commander, US Central Command requires close cooperation with the Commander, USF-I [as MNF-I has been formally redesignated] to support and resource the effort in Iraq to meet national policy goals. It is critical that the relationship between the Commander, US Central Command and the Commander, United States Forces-Iraq be close, candid, and productive to meet this end.

Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan

Commander, US Central Command requires close cooperation with Commander, NATO-ISAF to support and resource the effort to achieve the goals of the NATO mandate in Afghanistan. Commander, NATO-ISAF is dual-hatted as the Commander, US Forces Afghanistan, who formally reports to Commander, USCENTCOM, and a strong spirit of

collaboration will characterize our interactions.

Qualifications

If confirmed, you will be entering this important position at a critical time for CENTCOM.

What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?

My experience in the Central Command region spans thirty years, extending back to my first deployment to the Middle East in 1979 as a Marine infantry company commander. Since then, I have commanded in the CENTCOM AOR at the battalion, brigade, and division levels, first in Desert Shield/Storm, and in the post-9/11 period during in the initial invasions in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Additionally, I commanded I Marine Division in al Anbar Province during the Sunni Awakening, and following that, I commanded I Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Forces Central Command. Finally, I have served as the Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation, working with our NATO Allies in support of our efforts in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

I have been fortunate to develop personal relationships with several leaders in the Central Command region – military and civilian, plus U.S. and partner nations – for more than a decade, and if confirmed I will seek to expand those relationships to enhance the unity of effort and integrated harmony essential to success.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Commander, CENTCOM? If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

Key among the challenges will be helping to check any aggressive actions by Iran and setting the regional conditions for success in Afghanistan and Iraq. Furthermore, there are significant challenges in several of CENTCOM's sub-regions that require sustained and significant attention. The region has been torn by interstate and ethno-sectarian conflicts that have only intensified in the past three decades with the emergence of Al Qaeda, the specter of nuclear weapons, and the enormous wealth derived from petroleum and criminal enterprise. Today the area's stability is most seriously threatened by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, violent extremism, and the conflation of the two. These are the harsh realities of the CENTCOM region.

Beyond these sub-regional challenges, a number of transnational challenges exist. Amid pockets of affluence, many of the half-billion people in the CENTCOM region suffer from the absence of sustainable economic development, which in large part is brought on by weak government and civil institutions, insufficient human capital, and endemic corruption. These contrasts, when combined with the proliferation of global communications and interaction, have left many of the states in the AOR struggling to

manage change at a pace that reinforces stability rather than erodes it. These states often lack the capacity to deal with the continuing challenges posed by a range of criminal activities, to include piracy, smuggling, trafficking, and narcotics. The area's many ethnic, tribal, and religious differences have exacerbated this problem, as has the pressure of a rapidly expanding, youthful population that faces a future of underemployment and limited opportunity—all of which are factors that have led some groups to undermine traditional authority and seek radical change through militant means.

Though it is premature to have specific plans to address these challenges, if I am confirmed 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.

What management actions and time lines would you establish to address these challenges?

Since I am not confirmed yet, I need to gain better understanding of each of CENTCOM's lines of operation and get advice from our regional partners to give a complete answer. I can say that if I am confirmed, I will periodically review and assess our strategy, activities, and programs to address the challenges in the CENTCOM region.

If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish and what actions would you initially take as Commander, CENTCOM?

Should I be confirmed, the mission in Afghanistan will be my immediate priority. Other significant priorities include helping Pakistan in its struggle against extremism, continuing the responsible drawdown in Iraq, deterring Iranian destabilizing activities, addressing the presence of Al Qaeda and affiliated extremist groups in Yemen and throughout the region, and countering the scourge of piracy on the high seas.

While it would be premature for me to have detailed plans to address these priority areas, my approach will be guided by several concepts if I am confirmed: I will require highly integrated civil-military efforts from the highest to the lowest levels. To that end, I will seek to ensure harmony in the relationships of military and civilian leaders at all levels, emphasizing a strong spirit of collaboration with all concerned. I will strengthen and sustain our multilateral and bilateral partnerships in the region based on shared interests. And each of these elements will contribute to an overall approach that is comprehensive and capitalizes on comparative advantages of components within the whole of our own government and that of our partners.

What were the major lessons that you learned from your previous experience in Iraq and most recently as Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command, that are most applicable to the duties you would assume if confirmed?

One of the most important lessons I have learned throughout my 38-year career in commanding troops from the platoon level to the combatant command level is to

appreciate and recognize the skill and sacrifice of those serving our country in the military or as civilians. Beyond that, and specifically related to the Central Command region, I have learned to appreciate the region's rich social and cultural history from my experiences leading Marines in Iraq and in Afghanistan and from my many contacts in the region. I have obtained further insight as the Commander of the I Marine Expeditionary Force and Marine Forces Central Command, and in my present assignment. I have sharpened my understanding of counterinsurgency strategy in leading the Marine Corps' Combat Development Command, where I was able to help shape much of the current doctrine and training that the Marine Corps has since incorporated. It was also there that I was able to co-author, with General Petraeus, the new Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual. In my current position, I have learned a great deal about the current operating environment in the Central Command region, and the needs of the forces that are operating there.

Readiness of Forces

What is your assessment of the readiness of U.S. forces that have been deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom?

I am riveted to this issue on a daily basis in my current position as US Joint Forces Commander, and our forces are extremely well trained, and increasingly combat hardened – they are ready for the fight, technically and tactically. Those deployed to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) receive the best training and equipment possible, and they possess an unparalleled level of combat experience, which has been thoroughly integrated into the training process from the recruit to unit level. Pre-deployment training at the various Joint Training Centers provides tailored counterinsurgency scenarios and incorporates up-to-the minute lessons learned from troops on the ground in Afghanistan. Fielding of critical protective equipment, such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protective (MRAP) family of vehicles is on schedule. I have worked hard in my current position to ensure that all levels of command are appropriately focused on ensuring the readiness of US OEF forces.

That said, there is always room for improvement. Gaps in our counter-insurgency doctrine and training have been addressed as we adapted to the enemy situation.

What is your assessment of the readiness of U.S. forces that have been deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom?

My answer to this question mirrors the above response. Our forces in Iraq are highly trained, well led, and fully prepared for the mission. Many of the senior leaders who will execute Operation NEW DAWN have been closely involved in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM over several years – LTG Austin, for one. We have a good understanding of the requirements for completing the military mission in Iraq and I am confident we are well postured to facilitate the transition to Department of State led operations.

Have you observed any significant trends in or apparent gaps with respect to

personnel, equipment, or training readiness in units upon arrival in either theater?

No. Overall, the readiness of units arriving in the AOR has been high and the Services have done well preparing units to deploy. Where issues have arisen, the Services have been adaptive and incorporated feedback from the theater by making necessary adjustments in force preparations. There has been constant dialogue with US Joint Forces Command and the Service training centers to provide immediate feedback in order to adjust training and the training environment. Where adjustment has been necessary, supplemental funding has been essential to meeting the requirements especially for counterinsurgency training during the pre-deployment phase and roll out of coalition command and control networks. Continued, expanded language training will remain a training focus for these sorts of wars.

What are your views on the growing debate over whether U.S. forces are putting too much emphasis on preparing for counterinsurgency and irregular warfare operations or too little emphasis on preparing for high intensity force-on-force conflict and full spectrum operations?

War is war and I think the debate is overblown. Irregular warfare is important and conventional capability is important as well, and many skill sets are applicable to both types of fighting. As Secretary Gates has emphasized, irregular warfare must become a core competency of the US military. That does not mean that every service is “fifty-fifty” in a split of conventional versus irregular warfare capabilities. It means that they have to train and fight across the full range of military operations. We need to gain a competency at the national level right down to the tactical level without surrendering our nuclear deterrence or conventional superiority, behind which the international community gains great benefit. We do not have the freedom at this point in history to say that we are going to surrender one part of the spectrum – if we embrace a single, preclusive form of warfighting, we do so at our peril. The enemy will always move against perceived weakness, which means that we have to be strong across the full spectrum. This requires agile forces, educated leaders, and lengthened dwell times between deployments especially for the Army and Marine Corps.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy and Major Challenges

In his speech at West Point in December 2009, the President formulated his strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

What role, if any, did you play in the formulation of the President’s strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan?

None.

Do you agree with that strategy?

I fully support the policy of the President and I believe the strategy is sound.

Do you agree with the President's decision to begin reductions of U.S. forces in July 2011?

Yes.

Please explain why or why not.

I support the policy of the President. I understand the July 2011 date to begin reduction of U.S. Forces that the President announced at West Point last December as the beginning of a transition of security tasks to the Afghans, based on our assessment of conditions on the ground at that time. The drawdown of U.S. Forces will be based on conditions on the ground at that time, as 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." Consistent with our counter-insurgency lessons learned and our doctrine, the transition will involve a "thinning out" of forces rather than simply dropping them to Afghan National Security Forces. Some 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, as we checkmate the enemy's designs.

Do you agree with the President's decision that the pace of reductions beginning in July 2011 will be conditions based?

Yes.

Please explain why or why not.

The responsible drawdown of forces beginning in July 2011 must be conditions based so that we ensure that Afghan National Security Forces can stand up against internal and external threats with only modest international support, thus leaving Afghanistan in a position to deny enemy use of its territory.

What are the major challenges and problems you foresee, if confirmed as the next Commander, CENTCOM, in the implementation of the President's strategy?

The most urgent challenges will be to establish security and to protect the Afghan population, while increasing the numbers and capabilities of the Afghan National Security Forces. This will require the strong partnering between our forces and the Afghan Army, which synergistically improves Coalition and ANA combat performance in checkmating the enemy. Other important challenges include strengthening trust among key regional actors, the process of reintegration and reconciliation, improving governance, and combating corruption.

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

Having confidence in the ability of General Petraeus to execute the President's strategy in Afghanistan and for he and I to work in the closest possible partnership, I will seek to

ensure that the effort there is fully resourced in a coherent and comprehensive manner. I will also work to set broader regional conditions for the success of the mission.

Security Situation in Afghanistan

What is your assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan and the nature, size, and scope of the anti-government insurgency?

The insurgency in Afghanistan has proven to be resilient, and the security situation remains violent. The Taliban-dominated insurgency has shown an ability to adapt, and remains a threat in many populated areas. The insurgents fight among the people to deny the Afghan government from developing and representing the will of the Afghan people. But I believe the enemy is losing its strategic initiative. In the roller-coaster effect we always see in counter-insurgency, progress and violence coexist. While progress is spotty, overall the directions are trending toward the positive for us.

What is your understanding of the relationship between the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan and the nature and extent of their cooperation?

Their relationship isn't as close as it once was. They still share similar ideologies and they both want the expulsion of all foreign forces from Afghanistan, but for different reasons. The Taliban want to re-establish their medieval government; al Qaeda wants to re-establish its sanctuary and to spread its Salafist ideology, primarily through violent attacks on innocents.

Coalition Capabilities

Do you believe that the current level of ISAF troops and other U.S. troops and equipment in Afghanistan are sufficient to carry out the mission?

I have reviewed the troop-to-task assessments and I believe that there are sufficient troops for combat operations, but there remains the need to adequately resource forces to partner, mentor, and help train the ANSF. Working to build the ANSF so that it can protect the population with minimal international support is the preeminent task for ISAF as it builds Afghan ability to protect its own people and territory.

If not, what are the current shortfalls in troops and/or equipment required for that mission?

The shortage of trainers and partner-mentor personnel is approximately 1000 personnel.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you have for meeting any current shortfalls in troops or equipment required for the mission?

If confirmed, I will work with ADM Stavridis, our partner nations and other stakeholders to gain the needed personnel, equipment and forces.

Do you believe our NATO allies should be doing more to eliminate any shortfall in resourcing the NATO ISAF mission requirements?

While I appreciate the increased commitments from Allies and partners that are adding about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, I do feel there can be more contributions from other countries both from NATO and other Allies and partners, especially providing personnel for institutional trainers and OMLTs and POMLTs.

Command Structures in Afghanistan

There have been a number of changes to the command structures in Afghanistan over the past year, including the standing up of the ISAF Joint Command under a three-star commander, U.S. Lieutenant General David Rodriguez, and the establishment of the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan under a three-star commander, U.S. Lieutenant General William Caldwell.

What is your assessment of the current command structures for ISAF and for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan?

Monitoring these developments from my current position, I believe tremendous progress has been made over the past year. In addition to the ISAF Joint Command and NATO Training Mission Afghanistan, a Joint Task Force has been established under VADM Robert Harward to address detainee and rule of law issues, and other arrangements have been put in place to address issues such as contracting and corruption. On the US side, we have consolidated the majority of US forces under the operational control of Commander USFOR-A, enhancing unity of effort considerably. These changes now provide the organizational structure necessary for successful execution of the mission.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to those command structures?

I am satisfied with the current command relationships.

Civilian-Military Cooperation in Afghanistan

What is your assessment of the current level of cooperation and coordination between the military and civilian efforts in Afghanistan to implement the counterinsurgency strategy, both within the U.S. Government and between NATO ISAF and international civilian entities?

From my current position, I assess the level of cooperation as improving on a steady upward trajectory. I will closely monitor the level of cooperation to provide the best possible harmony to maintain our unity of effort.

The integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan was developed by the US Embassy and US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) in close coordination with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). I understand that this document integrates and synchronizes actions and activities across the civilian, military and international community to achieve common objectives in Afghanistan. This plan reflects significant on-going collaboration and is the model for future planning.

Civil-military cooperation has also been strengthened with the ongoing “civilian surge” of approximately 1,000 additional civilian officials to help build governance and development capacity in Afghanistan. The civilian surge has enabled ISAF and the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) Headquarters, along with each of the regional headquarters staffs, to evolve into fully integrated civil-military teams. The civilian surge has also increased the numbers of experts at the provincial level, under Provincial Reconstruction Teams and District Delivery Teams.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend for improving the cooperation and coordination between the military and civilian efforts in Afghanistan?

Unity of effort and civ-mil harmony in relationships are critical to the accomplishment of the mission in Afghanistan. If I am confirmed, I will work closely with the Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan – the natural counterpart to the Commander, US Central Command – as well as the civil-military team on the ground in Kabul, along with the NATO and other leaders to ensure that all of our work – civilian and military -- is mutually supportive in pursuit of our goals in Afghanistan.

Building the Afghan National Security Forces

The current strategy for training and equipping the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) calls for growing the Afghan National Army (ANA) to a level of 171,000 and the Afghan National Police (ANP) to a level of 134,000 by October 2011.

What is your assessment of the ANA?

It would be premature for me to formally assess the ANA in my current position. In broad terms, I recognize that the ANA are often cited as one of the most respected institutions in the Afghan Government. ANA and police forces are now jointly leading security efforts in Kabul and elsewhere in a more limited fashion. I am also aware that ANA commanders are now partnering with Coalition forces during joint operational planning, and on any given day, much of the combat against our enemy is conducted by ISAF – ANA partnered units. All of these factors lead me to believe that ANA is developing, while significant challenges remain, including the fielding of sufficient combat power to adequately secure terrain and the growth of logistics capabilities.

What is your assessment of the ANP?

It would be premature for me to formally assess the ANP in my current position. In broad terms, I am familiar with the many challenges that confront the ANP, which can be attributed to the shortfall of Police Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams (POMLTs). Many ANP units have experienced poor retention and high attrition. The ANP also suffers from poor leadership and a scarcity of trained officers and NCOs, despite other, more positive signs of development. The decision to no longer deploy untrained police in an effort to more rapidly fill the ranks is the right one; they must be trained and this decision, shifting from recruit-deploy-train to recruit-train-deploy will improve ANP capability and standing. Recent increases in recruitment and the beginning of ISAF partnering with the ANP are positive gains.

In your view, will the currently-planned end strength levels for the ANA and ANP be sufficient to provide security and stability in Afghanistan, or should these target end strength levels be increased?

This is a critical question that I will work with COMISAF to explore further upon taking command, if confirmed. I am aware of ongoing analysis by NTM-A on the possible need for growth beyond currently approved goals. While this process is ongoing, I am not in a position to say that the currently approved strength of 305,600 will prove sufficient. COMISAF has expressed his commitment to closely evaluating end strength requirements – and I will interface with him on this issue at length, if confirmed.

What in your assessment are the greatest challenges to building the capacity of the ANSF to assume responsibility for Afghanistan's security?

If confirmed, I will review the efforts that are currently underway in building the capacity of ANSF and provide my own assessment, as required. At that time, I'll be cognizant of those challenges that have already been identified, such as leader development, attrition, recruitment, retention, balancing current operational needs with long-term demands, and unfilled training requirements, among others.

If confirmed, how would you recommend addressing these challenges?

I would work closely with COMISAF to ensure that NTM-A/CSTC-A have the appropriate level of resources that are necessary to meet the identified mission objectives.

There remains a shortfall in the number of training personnel required for the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A), both in terms of institutional trainers at training centers and training teams embedded with Afghan Army units and Afghan police units.

What in your view should be done to encourage NATO allies to provide more institutional trainers?

We can encourage our Allies and partners to provide more trainers by addressing their concerns on the issues of money and force caps. There are productive ways to coordinate and facilitate countries willing to donate funding for other countries that are willing to deploy but lack the necessary funds. The UAE, for example, recently made a generous offer to help fund deployments to assist in overcoming the shortage of required trainers.

To overcome some of these force cap issues, we should ask our Allies and partners to send instructors to teach in ANSF schools on a rotational, temporary duty basis. The recent decision by Malaysia to send police trainers to Afghanistan is a positive step. This would provide the specialized trainers required, while building capacity for the Afghan forces and enhancing the expertise of Coalition partners. On all these matters, I will work closely with NATO's Civilian Senior Representative in Afghanistan Mark Sedwill and Admiral Stavridis.

What should be done to encourage NATO allies to provide additional trainers to embed with the Afghan Army and police?

In addition to the proposals I have already mentioned, the US can encourage our Allies to provide more embedded trainers by offering to provide NATO interoperable equipment that would give them greater capability to move and communicate. Many nations are unable to equip their forces to meet NATO standards. The US supports many such nations now, although we are constrained by our own resource requirements and the overall shortage of critical assets such as MRAPs (though the MRAP shortage will be eliminated late this fall).

Oversight responsibility for the contract to train the Afghan National Police is in the process of transitioning from the Department of State (DOS) to the Department of Defense (DOD). However, it will be several months before the DOD contract for ANP training is awarded while a full and open competition is conducted. In the interim, DOS is extending the existing DOS-managed ANP training contract and seeking appropriate modifications to address oversight deficiencies and align contract requirements with the NTM-A mission.

What is your view of the advisability of using contractors to perform this function?

Contractors fill critical shortfalls in government manpower capacity. The demand for

critical skills in low density areas is often filled with contractors to enable mission success. Without a larger force of military or government law enforcement, contractors must be used to fill this critical gap.

What level of performance do you believe we can reasonably expect from private security contractors engaged to provide training to the ANP?

In the large majority of cases, the performance should be fully sufficient to accomplish the mission. With clear performance requirements stipulated in the contract, we should be able to achieve the desired levels of performance from ANP trainers. We will also ensure that proper levels of quality assurance processes are used to ensure required levels of performance are met. When the DoS contract was extended, desired performance requirements were clarified with the contractor. This issue will demand keen oversight to ensure the contractor training is sufficient.

If confirmed, what is your assessment of DOD's resources and capacity to conduct appropriate oversight of the ANP training contract for building the capabilities of the Afghan police forces?

I feel DoD has the resources and capacity in place to conduct the necessary oversight. In response to the DoD Inspector General and DOS Inspector General concerns in their joint report entitled, "DOD Obligations and Expenditures of Funds Provided to the Department of State for the Training and Mentoring of the Afghan National Police," issued February 9, 2010, DoD has made oversight of the new contract a priority. DOD is currently competing the new ANP contract and is in the process of planning an extensive oversight program that will include full-time contract oversight and management as well as increased contract officer representatives in the field, quality assurance personnel, and property managers. In December 2009, CSTC-A identified 26 additional high-priority positions to strengthen oversight of the ASFF program, including acquisition officers, internal auditors, foreign military sales specialists, and finance specialists. These experts are providing CSTC-A with the depth of knowledge needed to oversee the budget and acquisition processes, as well as enhance contract oversight.

CSTC-A also has: put new policies and procedures in place to implement adequate contract oversight; implemented a system to ensure quality assurance for all contracts; established a six-person Contract Management Team to monitor contracts, validate contract oversight, and share best practices across the command; and established a process to conduct a weekly contract performance review.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure proper DOD oversight of the ANP training contract?

I would work with CSTC-A and NTM-A to continue the progress that has been made in recent months and will look closely for additional ways to improve oversight.

Partnering with Afghan Security Forces

The Committee received a briefing on plans for the campaign in Kandahar, which called for the deployment of Afghan and ISAF security forces partnered together to provide a “rising tide” of security in and around Kandahar over a period of months.

What is your assessment of current efforts to partner Afghan security forces with ISAF forces in operations, particularly in Regional Command South (RC-South)?

As US, NATO, and Coalition partners concentrate efforts in Helmand and Kandahar, embedded partnerships will enable ISAF to accelerate the development of the fielded Afghan force and foster stronger leadership. The Afghans’ local knowledge, cultural understanding, and intuitive feel for the operating environment, coupled with our troops, technology, air assets, and logistics support are proving time and time again to be a powerful combination, one that is increasingly effective against the enemy.

Do you support moving as quickly as possible to partnering ISAF forces and Afghan security forces together on at least a 1 to 1 basis – one ISAF partnered with one or more Afghan – in order to accelerate the transition of responsibility for Afghanistan’s security to Afghan security forces?

I do support moving as quickly as possible to partnering ISAF and Afghanistan Security Forces. Partnering for ANA and ANP units is now fully implemented in RC East, South, and Southwest. Partnering is more difficult to implement fully in RCs North and West because of limited allied numbers and differences in the way allied forces are organized.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you recommend to increase the number of operations in which Afghan security forces are in the lead, including in RC-South?

I agree that Afghanistan forces need to take the lead in operations, but this should be done on a deliberate basis, following appropriate training, partnering and mentorship. Over time partnership will result in Afghan units that increasingly operate in the lead as the supported force. Although Coalition forces are already serving in a supporting role in many areas, US and Coalition forces still provide many of the required enabling capabilities, such as access to fires, air assets, and logistics support. Even in a supporting capacity, the role of the US and the international community will remain significant for some time to come, though embedded partnering will allow us to reduce the scope of our supporting role over time as Afghan forces continue to develop these capabilities for themselves. Afghan soldiers, police, and National Directorate of Security representatives recognize the value of embedded partnering, appreciate sharing the risk, and want to lead.

Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan

According to the United Nations (U.N.) Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan alone provides 85 percent of the estimated global heroin and morphine supply, a near monopoly. Of the estimated 380 metric tons of heroin produced in Afghanistan, approximately 5 metric tons stay in the country for local consumption or is seized by local law enforcement.

What is your assessment of the current U.S. and NATO strategies for combating the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics in Afghanistan?

I am generally supportive of the current counternarcotics (CN) strategies in Afghanistan which address not only narcotics production and trafficking but also focus on licit alternatives to poppy, agricultural development, demand reduction and treatment programs. This strategy is about dismantling the links between drugs, corruption, criminality and insurgency that plague the Afghan people. The CN team in Afghanistan is also heavily vested in the development of self reliant and effective CN law enforcement agencies such as the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan, which help break the narcotics-insurgency-corruption nexus and help connect the people of Afghanistan to their government. If confirmed, I will closely examine the regional strategy to ensure it supports ISAF's efforts in Afghanistan and addresses the public health menace this crop produces.

What changes, if any, would you make to those strategies if you are confirmed?

I support efforts to work closely with our coalition partners and NATO allies to reduce, when appropriate, the number of national caveats inhibit associated with CN. I believe it is also important to begin to address the narcotics problem as a regional threat. When we are successful in our Afghan CN efforts, those involved in the trade will move their operations elsewhere, and we need to deny these traffickers safe haven across both Central and South Asia.

A number of officials in DOD and the Intelligence Community (IC) have called for investing significantly more resources in identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with the illegal narcotics trade. The objective would be to identify key individuals within Afghanistan, as well as individuals enabling the flow of money outside of Afghanistan. Comparable efforts have been undertaken by the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization against the flow of money and components for improvised explosive devices.

What are your views on efforts to invest additional resources into identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with the illegal narcotics trade, both inside and outside Afghanistan?

Cutting off access to this vital component of insurgent funding is an important part of a comprehensive counterinsurgency campaign. From my current position, it would be premature for me to evaluate the appropriate distribution of resources to this part of the

mission, which is implemented in large part by USFOR-A with US Central Command in an oversight role.

I am aware that recent international community studies indicate narcotics account for more than half of insurgent financing. While the specific percentages/amounts are debatable, there is consensus that narcotics are a pillar of insurgent financial resources. This is especially true in the Eastern and Southern Provinces of Afghanistan. Finding the various financial sources and tracking money flows into the insurgency is absolutely critical to defeating it.

Part of my role, if confirmed, will be to ensure appropriate oversight of the funding flows. This will require a highly integrated interagency effort at all levels. Tracking financial data and flow is not a traditional military skill set, but our operations-intelligence personnel can provide value-added to interagency organizations devoted to maintaining the picture on financial resources of the insurgency. Examples include the Drug Enforcement Administration-led Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) and the proposed law-enforcement support centric Trans-National Crime Support Center, which will contain the DoD Counternarcotics Support Center. Investing in these types of organizations will be the key to maintaining unity of effort and maximizing resources.

Reintegration and Reconciliation

Do you support offering incentives – such as employment and protection from reprisal – to low- to mid-level Taliban fighters who are willing to reintegrate with Afghan society and switch to supporting the Afghan Government?

Yes. I believe that reintegration is an important element of a successful counterinsurgency campaign. As such, I support incentives that promote the confidence necessary for former fighters and their host communities to feel secure. The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program utilizes a community-based approach that should result in job creation for all members of a community, to include former fighters. These incentives provide alternatives to fighting, as well as promote the reintegration of former fighters into local communities.

What is your assessment of the reintegration plan that has been developed by the Government of Afghanistan with ISAF assistance?

I believe that the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program provides the necessary framework to support success by empowering Provincial and District governments with national-level support. Further guidance is expected from the Afghan government that will provide the detailed guidance necessary for implementation, which, if confirmed, I will look forward to reviewing.

In your view, what should be the redlines for any negotiations with the leadership of the Taliban on reconciliation?

I would support a reconciliation process as long as it is Afghan-led. Those that reconcile

must respect the Afghan constitution, renounce violence, and have no material ties or support for al Qaeda or its associates.

Local Defense Initiative

President Karzai has approved a program called the Village Stabilization program that is designed to empower local communities to provide for their own security. President Karzai has previously expressed concern, however, that the program risks strengthening local warlords.

What is your assessment of the Village Stabilization program?

Having monitored the situation closely, this has been one of COMISAF's highest priorities as he has engaged President Karzai and others on a number of occasions in recent weeks on this issue. This program, now called Afghan Local Police (ALP) will enable the local population to take a more active role in, and significantly improve, local security. It is specifically designed to link the local population with district governance, enabling this through community outreach and shuras, as well as vetting and training a local defense force. It is critical that we link these efforts to central government, and importantly, to the local and regional-based ANSF capabilities to maximize effect and develop enduring support. By doing so, the local population is empowered while the Afghan central government's legitimacy is simultaneously strengthened. I am heartened by the recent progress, the result of Afghan government leadership, discussion and decision.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the program? If confirmed, how would you seek to address those concerns?

I am aware of concerns others have expressed that these programs may create a dependency on the enabling Coalition special forces (SF) rather than the government, as well as concerns that without proper training and oversight, these programs may create local militias that abuse military training and threaten local populations or even result in a greater militia that competes with uniformed ANSF.

I expect that such problems can be avoided by executing this plan well: understanding the programs' potential strengths and weaknesses, focusing intelligence, and taking prudent mitigation measures, such as (1) ensuring program sites and participants are properly chosen, vetted and trained; (2) ensuring the program is well balanced – the district governance and local/traditional leadership must be empowered in the decision making process; and (3) the enabling element must be stabilized on-site to provide continuity for the force in training, and focus on developing partnered relationships with ANSF units and key leaders. However, ISAF elements should only act as enablers and ensure the community does not become dependent upon them.

Reconstruction Efforts in Afghanistan

In your view, what should be the respective roles of the military and the U.S. civilian

agencies in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan?

The civil-military partnership is the key to establishing unity of effort in all our activities—respective roles should not be stove-piped, but integrated within this framework. Civil-military cooperation has been strengthened with the ongoing “civilian surge” of approximately 1,000 additional civilian officials to help build governance and development. The role of the civil-military team should be as trainers, advisors, and mentors, positioning the Afghans to take the lead in making Afghanistan more self-reliant. The civil–military team must continue to conduct mutually supporting stability and reconstruction operations. As an example, the Afghanistan strategy for roads and electrification is the result of a concerted effort between GIRoA, DoD, USAID, and other donors.

What improvements, if any, do you believe need to be made in the coordination of military and civilian efforts to provide reconstruction relief and development and to enhance the governance capacity of the Afghan Government?

In my current position, I understand that US Central Command continues to leverage the strengthening of civil-military cooperation and capacity, which has been increased through the civilian surge in Afghanistan. To improve coordination, equal emphasis must be placed on improving our interagency partners’ capacity and resources to ensure their expert knowledge is leveraged. Also, departments and agencies must reassess mechanisms for funding large-scale infrastructure projects in Afghanistan by identifying the proper authorities for execution between key interagency partners such as DoD and USAID, as well as by working with Congress to define appropriate authorities.

Contract Oversight and Private Security Contractors

The Committee’s review of DOD private security contracts found that private security companies recruit from and frequently pay more than Afghan security forces. DOD reported in October 2009 that “private security contractors are, on average, paid more” than the Afghan security forces. The challenges associated with recruiting and retaining ANSF personnel has been attributed, in part, to this pay differential.

Do you agree that U.S.-funded contractors for private security should not be paid more than Afghan security forces?

The discrepancy in payments to PSC vis-à-vis ANSF can be a disruptive influence to organizing and maintaining effective and professional security forces. We need to find ways to stop the unintended competition between the PSC and ANSF and I will support General Petraeus and the Afghan government leadership in this effort.

If so, what steps would you envision taking to correct that problem, if confirmed?

A possible solution is building comparative salary caps into our contracts to ensure the PSC and ANSF have salaries more closely aligned with each other. However, the effort must be cautious so as not to degrade the quality of those recruited.

Task Force Spotlight and Task Force 2010 have missions to facilitate the capability for greater oversight, regulation, operational transparency, and visibility of the flow of contracting funds and goods below the prime contractor level. I believe these efforts will eventually minimize malign actor influence, improve PSC accountability, and ensure an improved distribution of funds to the Afghan people. Their conclusions may illuminate additional ways to mitigate the consequences of pay disparity.

In his November 2009 inaugural statement, President Karzai stated that within the next two years, he wanted “operations by all private, national, and international security firms to be ended and their duties delegated to Afghan security entities.”

Do you believe that we should be working toward the integration of Afghan private security contractor personnel, who are currently performing security for facilities and supply convoys, into the ANSF?

Yes, but until the Afghan Government has this capacity, we will need to use legal, licensed, and controlled PSCs to accomplish appropriate missions. Like the ANSF, the PSCs also require high-quality employees who are not supportive of malign activities we will look for ways to support the Afghan Government’s intentions to transition PSCs. We do not want to force integration at the expense of PSCs involved in security activities, but phase it in, over time, as security improves. I believe the transition from private security contractors to ANSF will occur gradually and at the direction and encouragement of the Afghan Government.

If so, what steps would you envision taking to bring about that result, if confirmed?

ISAF and the Afghan government are working together to develop courses of action to reduce reliance on PSCs. I would insist that security personnel being considered for integration into the ANSF flow through the same vetting process as current ANSF personnel. We must better leverage and integrate our intelligence community and investigative agency assets to provide our partners with actionable information. If confirmed, I will assess the cooperation between ISAF and the Afghan government as they develop a phased program to work toward this transition, and I will continue efforts which support the build-up of the ANSF.

There is evidence that DOD security contractors are relying on local warlords and strongmen to provide men to staff their guard forces.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that:

- a. providers of manpower for security contractors are properly vetted; and**
- b. individuals we rely on as providers of manpower for security do not detract from the counterinsurgency mission?**

If confirmed, it will be one of my highest priorities to further investigate all aspects of this issue, but I have a broad appreciation for the basic principles at stake. To ensure proper vetting of PSCs, we must demand contractors immediately adhere to existing, specified contractual requirements. We have not, to date, adequately enforced current provisions requiring prime contractors and PSCs to report detailed census data, register their employees properly, or report serious incidents in an efficient manner. In fact, biometric data has been collected on only about 4,500 PSC employees, inhibiting proper vetting; this must be corrected quickly.

Reducing the influence of malign actors and power brokers demands that we leverage our entire national intelligence and investigative apparatus to identify, include, and action discovered derogatory information that might influence or undermine the contracting process. We may need to request legislative flexibility in allowing us to terminate contracts for bad actors, or to expedite awarding contracts to those who demonstrate adherence to requirements and are committed to full partnering in our counterinsurgency campaign.

To ensure that PSCs are not detracting from, or acting contradictory to the USFOR-A counterinsurgency mission directives, we will need to work closely with Afghan government authorities to require all contractors to adhere to mutually accepted rules regarding the use of force, to enforce guidelines for escalation of force, and to abide by the principles of the Law of Armed Conflict. As our values and ethics require from our own security forces, contractors must understand and be held accountable for measured response, using force for only appropriate defensive purposes. To this end, we will need to work with the Afghan government and support USFOR-A efforts to ensure PSC personnel are properly trained, regulated, inspected, and investigated when required.

Civilian Casualties and Rules of Engagement

A critical objective of the counterinsurgency strategy is to provide protection to the Afghan people, including minimizing the risk of civilian casualties. ISAF has issued revised procedures aimed at reducing the risk to civilians from military operations.

In your view, do the current rules of engagement (ROEs) in Afghanistan, for both NATO and U.S. forces, provide the necessary flexibility to allow forces to engage the enemy, protect themselves, and minimize the risk of civilian casualties?

We must balance two moral imperatives – that of doing everything humanly possible to protect the innocent, the Afghan people caught up in a war where our enemy intentionally endangers the non-combatants. The second imperative is that we never impede on our troops' right to self-defense; once in a fight they must be able to use all necessary force, constantly balancing this requirement with our commitment to protecting the innocent. From my own review, the ROE are sound. At the same time, I endorse GEN Petraeus' on-going review of the tactical directive, both its tone and its execution, to ensure we are giving the right intent to our troops in the field.

If confirmed, what general changes, if any, would you make to the current ROEs?

If confirmed, I will add my assessment to any changes that are made or proposed in this important area by General Petraeus in his capacity as COMISAF and Commander, USFOR-A.

Special Operation Forces Airlift in Afghanistan

A number of published reports indicate that special operations forces in Afghanistan face severe shortfalls in the availability of rotary wing airlift support for both direct and indirect missions.

What is your understanding of the current rotary wing airlift support available to special operations forces?

I understand that rotary wing lift is in high demand across the US Central Command area of responsibility, but particularly in Afghanistan where the roads are poor, the terrain is mountainous, and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices has increased the risk to our forces, markedly. Special Operations Forces have their own organic rotary wing lift, and are supplemented by lift from general purpose forces in accordance with Commander USFOR-A's priorities.

If confirmed, how would you prioritize requests from special operations forces for rotary wing airlift support from general purpose forces?

If I am confirmed, I will continue to delegate authority to Commander of US Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) to prioritize available rotary wing assets in support of the mission in Afghanistan. This responsibility includes meeting the requirements of SOF, should their organic assets be insufficient for a specific mission. My expectation will be that the Commander USFOR-A will continue to allocate these finite assets to the most prioritized SOF and conventional missions in accordance with his mission priorities.

Pakistan

What is your assessment of the threat to U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan posed by the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network, al Qaeda and other militant extremists finding sanctuary in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

The strategic intent of these extremist groups remains imposing their will over the people through the removal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, preventing GIROA from developing into an effective and legitimate government, and reinstating the Islamic government headed by Mullah Omar. Weak or ungoverned areas along the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region provide an unequalled haven for these violent extremist organizations. These physical havens, under increasing pressure on both sides of the border, provide sanctuary for leadership, nodes for command and control, training, media

operations, external operational planning and other functions essential to the syndicate of extremist groups that include al Qaida, the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and others. Each of these groups continues to pose a threat to US and Coalition forces, but also to Afghan and Pakistani stability.

What is your assessment of the current status of U.S.-Pakistan military cooperation on confronting this threat?

I understand that US Central Command has made great strides over the past 18 months in building an enduring strategic partnership with the Pakistan military. Cooperation is particularly strong between US Military counterparts and the Frontier Scouts. As well, important relationships have been forged across other services as we support their efforts for a sustained COIN campaign. The Office of Defense Representative Pakistan has been an integral part of this effort and continues to work closely with the US Ambassador, her country team, and Pakistan General Headquarters to confront our shared threats in the region. This maturation has been challenged by past mistrust and requires continued efforts to enhance teamwork.

India

How does the fact that India is in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility (AOR) while Pakistan is in the CENTCOM AOR affect the United State's ability to treat the region's challenges holistically?

Close coordination between US Central Command and US Pacific Command is a recognized condition for the regions' challenges to be addressed. Though some advantages could be realized with India and Pakistan in one AOR, PACOM and CENTCOM, with adequate coordination mechanisms to address U.S. interests in the region, can work symbiotically on long-term security measures.

In your view, how do our military cooperation and engagement with India affect our efforts in Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Pakistan, naturally, has concerns about any military cooperation between the US and India, which affects both our relationship with Pakistan and, indirectly, or efforts in Afghanistan. However, we make clear to Pakistan that our military cooperation and engagement is not a threat to Pakistan and that this is not a zero-sum game. We have important relationships and strategic partnerships with both countries that are not at the expense of either.

Iraq

What is your assessment of the current situation facing the United States in Iraq?

The security situation in Iraq has greatly improved since the height of sectarian violence

there in 2007, but a number of significant challenges remain. 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.

What do you believe are the most important steps that the United States needs to take in Iraq?

The combination of circumstances described above permits us 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. 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.

The responsible drawdown of our forces to 50,000 by September 1st is on track, as is the withdrawal of our equipment. 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.

In your view, what are the major challenges that confront the Commander, U.S. Forces-Iraq?

Both Generals Odierno and Austin, in whom I have great confidence, will be faced with supporting the establishment of a new government and establishing or strengthening relationships with Iraq's national leaders. The government formation process will span a period of months, which carries with it a measure of uncertainty and requires further vigilance in the security arena. The issues along the disputed internal boundary with the Kurdistan Regional Government remain unresolved and the associated Arab-Kurd tensions remain a significant challenge. The underlying economic, social, and security issues must be addressed to achieve an enduring solution. The establishment of constructive relationships between Iraq and its regional neighbors is required for long term regional stability. Diplomatic efforts to foster these relationships and counter destabilizing external influences will also be critical to US interests in the region. The major challenge is managing and communicating risk during the responsible drawdown and transition to a civilian led mission thereby ensuring that internal and external violent forces do not threaten the security environment. The ongoing performance of the care-taker government in terms of providing security, oil infrastructure improvements and basic services (e.g. electricity, etc.) is heartening.

U.S. Force Reductions in Iraq

Earlier this year, current U.S. Forces-Iraq commander General Raymond Odierno stated that, based on the reasonably high voter turnout and low-level of violence during the Iraqi elections, U.S. forces are still on track to end its combat mission and continue the withdrawal of troops. According to General Odierno, “Only a catastrophic event would keep us from doing that now.”

Do you agree with General Odierno's assessment that the U.S. troop drawdown plan remains on track for August and beyond?

Yes. I agree with General Odierno's assessment.

What, in your view, are the greatest remaining risks to the successful transition of the mission in Iraq and withdrawal of U.S. forces as planned and required by the Security Agreement, and what would you do, if anything, to mitigate these risks?

The greatest remaining risks to the successful transition include continued communal rivalries across sectarian lines, the insufficient capacity of the Iraqi Government to provide for its people, violent extremist organizations, and destabilizing influence from external countries. These risks cannot be mitigated by USF-I alone. They will require a whole of U.S. Government and Iraqi Government approach. This would include adequate funding for the continued development of the Iraqi security forces and the tasks associated with the transition to a State Department lead in Iraq.

What actions, if any, do you think should be taken by U.S. forces to protect, or limit reprisals against, Iraqi nationals who supported U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom?

To my knowledge, there is no pervasive hostility today in the general populace of Iraq toward the large number of Iraqis who supported the liberation of Iraq from Saddam's regime. Of course, al Qaeda in Iraq and other violent extremists have ordered reprisals against those they felt threatened them or their cause. To the extent that we can, we should help the Iraqi government protect its people in the line with the governing documents of our relationship moving forward.

Consideration of United Nations Peacekeepers Replacing U.S. Forces in Northern Iraq

Unresolved political disputes in northern Iraq over security, boundaries, and distribution of oil revenues continue to pose a risk to continued progress toward a stable and self-sufficient nation. In this regard, current U.S. Forces-Iraq commander General Raymond Odierno stated that United Nations peacekeeping forces may need to replace U.S. forces in northern Iraq to manage this risk.

What is your assessment of the risk in northern Iraq and the concept of replacing U.S. forces there with U.N. peacekeepers?

Currently, the Combined Security Mechanisms are in place in northern Iraq as a temporary measure to help provide stability. Joint forces composed of U.S., Iraqi, and Kurdish troops protect the population from insurgent attacks, and U.S. forces are often called on to mediate tensions between Kurds and Arabs. Moving forward, I would need to review the concept of replacing U.S. forces with UN peacekeepers, in consultation with the Commander, USF-I, as well as appropriate interagency counterparts, if confirmed.

U.S.-Iraq Long-term Security Relationship

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take to ensure an effective and efficient transition from the current military mission through December 2011 to a long-term security relationship with Iraq?

In the short and mid-term, I will work with the interagency to continue to support the President's guidance and the objectives, support COMUSF-I's efforts for US Embassy Baghdad's Joint Campaign Plan, and fulfill the commitments of our Security Agreement with the Government of Iraq. As US military forces draw down in Iraq, I will work to support the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad's Mission Strategic Resource Plan as discussed in last week's Iraq Transition Conference. In the longer term, I will work to support US commitments for Iraq's security and stability as expressed in the Strategic Framework Agreement. Using traditional security cooperation tools, we will fulfill our Foreign Military Sales commitments to the Government of Iraq and conduct other security cooperation engagements, while supporting Iraq's integration with its moderate Arab regional neighbors, in support of US regional security objectives.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you take immediately or in the near-term to build a standard security cooperation relationship with Iraq?

If confirmed, in the short and mid-term, I will work with the rest of the U.S. interagency to continue to support the President's guidance and the objectives of the USF-I/U.S. Embassy Baghdad's Joint Campaign Plan, and fulfill the commitments of our Security Agreement with the Government of Iraq. As U.S. military forces draw down in Iraq, I will work to

support the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad's Mission Strategic Resource Plan as discussed in last month's Iraq Transition Conference. In the longer term, I will work to support U.S. commitments to Iraq's security and stability as expressed in the Strategic Framework Agreement. Using traditional security cooperation tools, we will fulfill our Foreign Military Sales commitments to the Government of Iraq and conduct other security cooperation engagements that support Iraq's security and stability, while supporting Iraq's integration with its moderate regional neighbors, in support of U.S. regional security objectives.

Transition to Lead U.S. Agency in Iraq

As the mission of U.S. military forces in Iraq changes and large numbers of troops begin to redeploy, responsibility for leading the planning and management of U.S. assistance to the Government of Iraq has begun to transition from the DOD to the DOS. The Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan recently reported that ongoing planning for this transition "has not been sufficiently detailed."

What is your understanding and assessment of the plans for this transition?

From my current position, I understand that Department of Defense and Department of State have completed substantial work over the past year in support of transition efforts from military to civilian lead in Iraq. As recently as Friday, 23 July, US Central Command hosted a conference held here in Washington DC to further develop transition planning. My assessment is that the interagency transition planning process is on track. I have also met with the prospective U.S. ambassador to Baghdad. If we are both confirmed by the Senate, we are committed to working together with General Austin and the Iraqi government for the smoothest possible transition.

What is your understanding and assessment of the progress being made toward the completion of this transition?

From my current position, I understand that significant progress is being made as Department of Defense, Department of State and other agencies work in unison to implement a seamless transition. The Iraq Transition Senior Leader Conference held last week was a significant milestone in ensuring that all agencies work together.

In your view, what are the most significant challenges to the efficient and effective transition of these agency roles?

Efficient and effective transition is predicated on the following two efforts: the development of Iraqi security forces that are capable of defending their population against internal threats and a strong civilian effort capable of sustaining the positive momentum gained over the last couple of years.

These two efforts require adequate resourcing, as well as a coordinated transfer of the tasks necessary to support these efforts. It is particularly important that the Department

of State is resourced to assume lead responsibility.

If confirmed, what action would you recommend or take, if any, to deal with these challenges and ensure an efficient, effective, and timely transition?

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Commander of USF-I, the US Ambassador, the interagency, and where necessary, the Government of Iraq to ensure that all of our transition objectives and tasks are executed in an effective and timely manner.

Iraqi Security Forces

What is your understanding of the state of training and equipping of Iraqi security forces?

Having monitored this issue closely from my current position, I believe the Iraqi Security Forces are functioning well as an internal security force and are progressing towards their minimum essential capability objectives. Within the Ministry of Defense, the Iraqi Army is functioning well as a counterinsurgency force and the Iraqi Navy is providing defense for both of the country's off-shore oil terminals. The Iraqi Air Force has shown significant improvements in accessions, training, and ground support. Within the Ministry of Interior, both the Federal Police and Oil Police have been deemed operationally capable, while the Provincial Police and Border Police have shown progress in performing their security functions. As we observe the Iraqi Security Forces performance, we can also see declining enemy coherence, an indicator of ISF effectiveness which is a direct outgrowth of their training.

What is your assessment of Iraqi security forces progress toward assumption of full responsibility for internal security?

Monitoring the situation from my current position, I understand that the Iraqi Security Forces are steadily improving and increasingly capable of providing internal security, which has been especially evident during the extended period of Iraqi government formation. Difficulties and challenges remain for Iraq. The Iraqis still need our help, however, as they continue to build their capabilities in order to protect against destabilizing external influences seeking to foment ethno-sectarian violence and distrust.

In your view, what is the importance, relative priority, and urgency, if any, of the Iraqi security forces developing the capability to defend its borders and airspace from external threats?

Among my highest priorities if confirmed as CENTCOM Commander will be to enable the critical continuation of our responsible drawdown in Iraq, while recognizing the importance of an Iraq Security Force capable of defending its borders against external threats who would harm Iraq. US Central Command will balance security assistance programs to ensure Iraq can continue to sustain its gains in counterinsurgency, while simultaneously building capabilities to defend its sovereign territory.

What is the appropriate role of U.S. forces, if any, in supporting the development of this capability with training, equipment, or other resources?

US and Iraqi forces have fought together for several years and have shared best practices throughout that time. Iraqis have proven the ability to lead operations effectively. The appropriate role for the United States at this time is to shift our assistance to one of advising and assisting the Iraqi forces and transition tasks to the US Embassy, to US Central Command, and to the Iraqi Government.

How would you characterize the performance of Iraqi forces in the conduct of security operations during and since the elections earlier this year?

The Iraqi Security Forces give clear evidence of strength and competence, leading the protection effort nation-wide. 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.

If confirmed, what action would you take, if any, to expand the development of logistics capabilities and a commitment to efficient management within the Iraqi security forces to ensure that the equipment they have been provided is maintained and ready to meet their security needs and protect the investment of billions of U.S. and Iraqi dollars over the years?

I fully support the priority the Iraqis have placed on raising their logistics capability to a higher level. Our exceptional US military logisticians provide the example and mentorship which is key to Iraqi Security Force leaders improving logistics capabilities.

Advise and Assist Brigades and Military/Police Transition Teams

In your view, does the size, structure, number, and operating procedures for U.S. Advise and Assist Brigades and Military and Police Transition Teams embedded with Iraqi security forces need to be changed in any way? If so, what would you recommend?

While I cannot address this question in detail from my current position, I find the overall concept of the Advise and Assist Brigades and Military/Police Transition Teams that are in place provide us appropriate flexibility, partner capacity, and force protection for the evolving operational environment in Iraq. I have no concerns at this time, but will consult with General Odierno on this issue if I am confirmed.

What is your view of the potential transition of this mission to contractors?

Beyond this potential transition, there is a broad imperative to periodically assess the performance of contractors supporting security operations of all types. Contractors

continue to perform admirably in a variety of supporting roles in theater. They are often highly-skilled government retirees with experience in theater, and many of them possess considerable military and police skills. My task, if confirmed, would be to oversee the evaluation and implementation of oversight and management processes led by military leaders in the region.

What in your view is the appropriate distribution of responsibility and resources for the security assistance, train, advise, and equip mission between special operations forces and general purpose forces in Iraq?

I would need to evaluate this issue, if confirmed, in consultation with the Commander, USF-I, as well as appropriate interagency counterparts, to make a judgment about the appropriate distribution of resources.

What is your assessment of how the Army is ensuring that general purpose forces are properly trained for the advise and assist or transition team mission, to include dissemination of “lessons learned” to incoming brigades and teams?

Our Army is doing a tremendous job in providing trained and ready forces for Iraq. The Army adapted quickly to this change of mission and is meeting USF-I’s requirements, and continues to improve based on unit feedback and USF-I recommendations. If confirmed, I would maintain the active on-going dialog with our military services to ensure we properly train our service members and their units for our remaining military tasks in Iraq.

Iraq Burden Sharing

In your view, what is the appropriate role for the United States, and particularly of U.S. Forces-Iraq, in reconstruction activities in Iraq going forward?

The US and Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) lays out a solid foundation for a long-term bilateral relationship, which guides US and Iraqi actions based on mutual interests. With the SFA serving as a roadmap, the US strategy for reconstruction activities integrates the efforts of the US Embassy Baghdad, USF-I, and other US and international partners. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) promote the development of reconstruction activities and enhance provincial and local governments in becoming self-sufficient, responsive, transparent, accountable, and capable of meeting the needs of the Iraqi citizens. Drawdown planning for all PRTs is underway as USF-I prepares to facilitate a seamless Department of State assumption of reconstruction and development activities.

CERP remains a key counterinsurgency tool for commanders to hold security gains and undermine insurgent influence in Iraq. As we drawdown, CERP will remain essential to support limited civil-military operations, such as humanitarian assistance, battle damage repair, and repair of minor municipal infrastructure, where it supports the COIN mission.

In your view, what capabilities or support should be the highest priorities for U.S. assistance to the Iraqi security forces?

From my current position, I understand that the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MoD), with the exception of logistics and sustainment, is on track to develop key capabilities prior to the redeployment of US Forces in December 2011. In addition to logistics and sustainment, there may be MoD challenges in the areas of planning and budgeting, procurement, and information technology. The capabilities of police, border security, and naval forces are improving; however, still require assistance to conduct effective internal, border, and maritime security. Iraqi command and control capabilities and logistical support nodes require further development to sustain these operational efforts, as well. The Iraqi Air Force, because of its more extensive training requirements and equipment shortfalls, requires a longer-term commitment. If confirmed, US Central Command will continue to work to provide the best support and sustainment of property purchased for the Iraqi Security Forces, consistent with US Embassy Baghdad guidance.

In your view, what capabilities and support for the Iraqi security forces should be the sole financial responsibility of the Government of Iraq?

Future Foreign Military Sales (FMS) that introduce new capabilities to the Iraqi Security Forces (such as F-16s) need to be funded by the government of Iraq. The Iraqis have demonstrated a serious commitment to funding their security needs through major M1A1 and C-130 programs, as well as the purchase of naval ships and air force training aircraft. Recognizing the fiscal realities in the US and Iraq, and the common enemies we face, I will continue to advise our Iraqi partners to acquire equipment designed to meet their specific requirements. Overall, FMS to the Iraqi Security Forces should focus on building security for the Iraqi people, improving and protecting its critical infrastructure, and securing Iraqi borders against malign influence.

Internally Displaced Persons

The U.N. estimates that some 500,000 have left their homes to find safer areas within Iraq.

What is your assessment of the internally displaced persons situation in Iraq and what impact, if any, does it have on the United States' military objective in Iraq?

The IDP situation in Iraq is a significant challenge for the Iraqi government. The government of Iraq has taken steps to support the return of Iraqis, and the IDP situation is improving. Due in large part to security gains, an increasing number of refugee families are returning. Recent efforts in line with the government's increased emphasis on national unity have been positive. The US supports the Government of Iraq as it reaches out to its displaced citizens and provides a transparent presentation of services and benefits. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting our commander in Iraq in the full implementation of measures to help the government of Iraq further increase its assistance to its refugees and IDPs.

Beyond working with the Iraqi Security Forces to improve the security environment in Iraq, do you believe that the U.S. military should play a role in addressing the internally displaced person situation?

The Department of State is responsible as the US Government lead on this issue, and this includes our efforts to support internally displaced persons and refugees. As the U.S. military moves to establish a traditional security cooperation relationship with Iraq, our force posture and our resources will change. Until the end of 2011, US Forces-Iraq will support the US Embassy-Baghdad when requested in accordance with the US-Iraq Security Agreement and within the limitations of the military means and capabilities available when any request is made.

Religious Minority Communities in Iraq

Public reports of targeted kidnappings and murders of non-Muslim religious leaders continue in certain parts of Iraq, most notably in the Ninewah region.

In your view, are non-Muslim religious minorities in Iraq at significant risk of being the victims of violence as a result of their religious status? Are there any of these groups that are particularly vulnerable?

The Iraq Constitution affords protection to minorities, and the Iraqi government has made measured progress in ensuring their protection. Nonetheless, non-Muslim religious minorities throughout Iraq remain at risk of violence. Extremists and insurgent militant groups continue efforts to ignite ethno-sectarian violence through attacks on vulnerable populations, to include non-Muslim religious minorities, but have failed to reignite the cycle of sectarian violence that plagued the country in 2006 and 2007 due to increasingly capable Iraq Security Forces.

If so, what is the appropriate role for the U.S. military in addressing their vulnerability?

The US military's mission to advise and assist the Iraqi Government and ISF must continue as planned and we must remain committed to the terms of the Security Agreement and the Strategic Framework Agreement, specifically focusing on the rule of law. Of note, ISF has demonstrated most recently that they are increasingly becoming a more professional and competent force that is capable of handling Iraq's internal threats.

U.S.-Iraqi Security Forces Command and Control Relations

What is your understanding of the lessons learned about U.S.-Iraqi command and control of combined operations over the last year and especially since the withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraqi urban areas?

As I am not confirmed as the Commander, US Central Command, I do not have the full

picture to adequately address this question. I do fully support highly integrated efforts with our Iraqi partners, while noting that Command and Control in a combined environment brings with it considerable challenges. To address these challenges, it will be necessary to integrate efforts at national and provincial operations centers as well as combined joint tactical operations centers. I think the proof of how well this is working today is found in the strong performance of the Iraqi Security Forces in this transition period when a new government is not yet formed. Frankly, I have been impressed with their stoic, capable performance, a key indicator of effective command and control.

What concerns, if any, do you have about command and control relationships with Iraqi forces in combined operations, and if confirmed, what actions would you take, if any, to mitigate challenges or improve capabilities in this regard?

I am not in a position to address this question at this time. Should I be confirmed, I will continue to assess the effectiveness of relationships and procedures in place and adjust if necessary.

U.S. Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq Command and Control Relationships

Policies directing and guiding command and control relationships for U.S. unified commands and their assigned and attached forces are found in statute, regulation, and in joint doctrine. In March 2010, changes were made to command relationships in Afghanistan to address operational challenges attributed to insufficient command and control authority for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan over forces attached to or operating in its AOR.

What is your assessment of the current command relationship structure for U.S. forces attached to or operating in the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and U.S. Forces-Iraq AORs?

I believe the current command relationships, as modified over this last year, align our structure for successful prosecution of the campaign.

In your view, do the Commanders of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan and U.S. Forces-Iraq have appropriate and sufficient command and control authority over all U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan and Iraq to ensure unity of command and unity of effort?

Yes, I believe the proper command and control authorities have been established for both USFOR-A and USF-I commanders.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you request with respect to command and control relationships for U.S. forces operating in Afghanistan or Iraq?

I am currently satisfied with the command and control relationships in Afghanistan and Iraq. If confirmed, I would not make any immediate changes.

In your view, what are the critical criteria that should be used to determine whether forces allocated to U.S. Forces-Afghanistan or U.S. Forces-Iraq are provided under “operational control” versus “tactical control”?

The critical criteria to determine the appropriate command and control relationship for U.S. forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq is mission accomplishment; ensuring the relationship give the commander the authority he needs to accomplish the mission. A wide range of others criteria also have bearing in any individual case. I am satisfied that in both Afghanistan and Iraq the current arrangements are adequate to ensure Generals Petraeus and Odierno have the authority they require.

Impact of Iraq Drawdown on Special Operations Forces

As conventional forces continue to draw down in Iraq, the requirement for SOF is projected to remain the same for the foreseeable future. However, SOF rely heavily on their conventional counterparts for many support and enabling functions including airlift, medical evacuation, resupply, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.

What is being done to make sure SOF are adequately supported in Iraq as the drawdown progresses?

US Central Command has begun the responsible drawdown of forces from Iraq, working to sustain the hard-won security gains achieved since the summer of 2007 and placing on track to have 50,000 troops in Iraq after this August. If confirmed, a key priority will be to work closely with COMUSF-I to protect and facilitate Special Operations Forces in Iraq. The disposition and composition of our conventional forces are specifically designed to sustain security and logistical requirements. Our Advisory and Assistance Brigades also possess the combat power to enable SOF operations across the battle-space, and logistical hubs are distributed to ensure responsive medical evacuation and other logistical needs for these forces.

Are we assuming additional risk in Iraq by moving some of these enablers to Afghanistan? If so, in what areas?

No. I understand that we are assuming no additional risk to SOF in Iraq with respect to repositioning some enablers to Afghanistan.

Confronting the Militias

Do you believe that the Iraqi government is taking the steps it must to confront and control the militias?

Yes. The Iraqi government has worked to manage the challenges presented by Sunni and Shi'a militia groups through a combination of security operations and engagement policies such as integrating the Sons of Iraq, and reconciliation initiatives with Muqtada al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia. However, some terrorist groups are more difficult for the Iraqi

government to target because of their covert nature and backing by Iran.

If confirmed, what role would you expect U.S. forces to play on this issue?

The Commander, US Central Command plays an important role in setting broad conditions to prevent militia groups from being supported by regional actors. Additionally, if I am confirmed, I will work with the Department of State and USF-I to foster inclusive political processes, to support the Iraqi government's anti-militia policies – using US intelligence capabilities, for example –and to continue to train, advise, and assist Iraqi Security Forces.

Counterinsurgency Doctrine

According to Field Manual 3-24, the new counterinsurgency manual, “twenty [soldiers or police forces] per 1000 residents is often considered the minimum troop density required for effective counterinsurgency operations.” Baghdad alone, according to doctrine, requires a force of 120,000 - 130,000 personnel to meet the minimum requirement. However, the increase in U.S. and Iraqi forces for Baghdad only provided for about 80,000 security forces.

Do you believe that 80,000 U.S. and Iraqi troops has been and remains sufficient and if so, why?

This is an issue that I will address in detail with the Commander, USF-I, if I am confirmed. The counterinsurgency threat in Iraq has considerably reduced since its peak levels in mid 2007. Additionally the Iraqi Security Forces are functioning well as an internal security force. Based on their current performance and our assessment of the security situation, the Iraqi Security Forces are well placed to assume the security role across all of Iraq, including Baghdad, within their current force structure in conjunction with continued USF-I advice and assistance.

What is your understanding of the status and adequacy of the risk assessment and mitigation plan associated with this deviation from doctrine?

The USF-I force remaining to provide an advise and assist function provides appropriate risk mitigation. I am confident that the improved security situation, combined with the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces and the presence of remaining USF-I forces mitigates risk to an acceptable level, but I will remain alert to any indications to the contrary.

Iran

What, in your assessment, are Iran's goals with respect to Iraq's stability and security?

Iran's motives are not entirely clear due to the nature of its government, though it appears that Iran seeks through its actions to influence the formation of the Iraq government, to distance Iraq from its Arab neighbors, and to weaken the relationship between Iraq and the United States.

What, in your assessment, are Iran's goals with respect to Afghanistan's stability and security?

Iran seeks the removal of Coalition forces, particularly U.S. forces, along its eastern border, expanded influence among Afghan government officials and its populace, and maintenance of a benign, friendly Afghanistan, increasingly reliant on Iran for trade, economics, reconstruction and cultural issues.

What options are available to the United States and its allies for influencing Iran's activities towards Iraq and how could CENTCOM play a role in that effort?

The U.S., its allies, and regional partners can counter Iranian influence in Iraq by establishing strong diplomatic, political, economic, and security relationships with Iraq and integrating Iraq into the international community. These efforts will allow Iraq to achieve national goals without support from Iran. The relationships also provide partner nations visibility on Iran's influence activities and provide an engagement platform with the Iraqis to diminish Iran's influence. Bilaterally, the U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement serves as the foundation for a long-term cooperative relationship between our two nations and gives us access to deter Iran's influence. Additionally, Turkey's diplomatic and economic links are heartening and portend well for Iraq determining its own future, unhindered by Iran's designs.

What, in your view, are Iran's military goals in the region?

Iran's foremost military goal is to ensure the survival of the regime. Another military goal is to maintain a power projection capability to influence other nations in the region, which may include the development of nuclear-weapons capability, but certainly includes proxy terror organizations.

What options do you believe are available to the United States to counter Iran's growing military and economic influence in the region and how could CENTCOM play a role in countering this influence?

Options to counter Iran's growing influence in the region include: enhancing international diplomatic cooperation; influencing Iran to adopt policies favorable to stability; undermining internal, regional, and global support for malign Iranian policies and activities; and controlling regional escalation.

I am aware that US Central Command has established a Regional Security Architecture (RSA) with Gulf partners to advance shared interests and to build our partners defensive

capabilities so they can resist Iranian intimidation.

Could a protracted deployment of U.S. troops in Iraq strengthen Iran's influence in the region?

No. Iran's influence will not be strengthened with an extended US presence in Iraq if regional governments and their respective populaces recognize the presence of US troops is to improve the security and stability of Iraq.

Iran is clearly going to remain a significant factor in the CENTCOM AOR. One of the critical objectives for the U.S. in this region is to determine how to achieve a more stable situation with respect to Iran for the future.

How do you believe CENTCOM could best participate in achieving a stable relationship with Iran in the future?

US Central Command can participate as part of whole-of-governments efforts in partnership with US Allies and partners in the region. The presence of CENTCOM forces in the region is a visible reminder of U.S. power, which is one element of the dual track approach to bring Iran back into the responsible community of nations.

United Arab Emirates

The United States has been working in recent years to strengthen security cooperation with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other nations participating in the Gulf Security Dialogue.

What do you believe are the potential benefits of our security cooperation with the UAE?

The U.S.-UAE cooperative partnership is the model for the region and is getting stronger every day. Our enduring relationship is key to regional security and stability because, by working together, we disrupt violent extremist organizations, deter potential adversaries, and defeat those who use proxies or malign influences against the U.S. or other partners in the region.

With the U.S.-UAE enduring partnership evolving, UAE continues to take a leadership role, with the U.S., in supporting other partners. UAE support has enabled other regional partners to become the theater focal point to train the trainers which is critical to building the Afghan security and police forces. The UAE also assists its neighbors in developing the capability to conduct counterterrorism operations that will eliminate safe havens from which terrorists train and operate.

By engaging with UAE and like-minded nations, we send a reassuring message to our friends in the region and a cautionary message to those who practice aggressive, destabilizing activities.

What do you believe is the appropriate role for CENTCOM in advancing U.S. security interests and cooperation with the UAE?

US Central Command must continue to partner with the UAE. The continued willingness of the UAE to support the presence of U.S. forces at key UAE locations, such as Al Dhafra Air Base, Fujariah and Jebel Ali Navy Bases, and Minhad Air Base, provides critical access and support for CENTCOM's operations across the region. We train and exercise together, which builds trust and confidence, so we can operate together as one team at the tactical and operational levels.

US Central Command should also continue to support the UAE's efforts to enhance regional security. The UAE's Air Warfare Center is already the acknowledged model of a regional center of excellence. The UAE's willingness to host the Integrated Air and Missile Defense Center of Excellence is another initiative in which US Central Command and the UAE will cooperate. The Center of Excellence will be the regional hub for air and missile defense doctrine discussions, simulated exercises, and improved partnership capacity, while promoting regional security and stability against air and ballistic missile threats. The UAE Air Force has also performed well at the USAF Red Flag exercise, demonstrating a commendable level of capability and strengthening deterrence in the Gulf.

Yemen

Prior to the attempted Christmas Day bombing of a U.S. bound airliner by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the U.S. Government had a robust security assistance program with Yemen. Some observers, while supportive of U.S. security assistance to Yemen, have suggested that the problems being confronted by the Government of Yemen cannot simply be addressed with the provision of additional security assistance.

What is your assessment of the situation in Yemen?

Yemen is struggling to address a number of challenges to its governance in four areas—Houthi rebels, southern oppositionists, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and economic deterioration. Six years of intermittent conflict in northwest Yemen between the Yemeni Government and Houthi rebels threatens stability. Although currently under a fragile ceasefire, there has been a recent increase in violence between the Houthi and pro-Government tribes. In the south, an opposition movement threatens Yemen's unity, although this movement currently lacks cohesive leadership and a central message. "Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" has a haven in Yemen, taking advantage of weak central Government control in Yemen's remote, tribal regions, and the Yemeni government's preoccupation with other existential regime threats (Houthi, southern opposition). Yemen's economy is failing, marked by high unemployment and exacerbated by poor security, dwindling oil reserves, and depleted aquifers. This challenges Yemen's ability to provide necessary services to its people without significant regional and international donor support.

While President Salih is able to manage these threats sequentially, a combination of spikes in the challenges listed above could stretch Sanaa's resources and military/security services to the breaking point. To date, Salih has managed these crises through negotiation and by co-opting his opponents, but there are signs his ability to exert control is waning. A newly-linked National Dialogue agreement between the ruling General People's Congress party and the opposition Joint Meeting Parties holds a glimmer of hope for political reconciliation. While this is a positive step in reanimating the Yemeni political system, it remains too early to assess its ultimate outcome, given years of mistrust between the Yemeni Government and a segment of its constituents.

Do you believe U.S. objectives in Yemen should be strictly focused on counterterrorism military and intelligence support to the Government of Yemen or is it necessary to broaden the focus to include humanitarian and other development activities?

No. While U.S. objectives in Yemen primarily address the growing regional and homeland terrorism threats presented by AQAP, this cannot be our sole focus. Yemen is looking for a long-term partner and if I am confirmed, I will work to solidify such a relationship. We must work with Yemen to not only build military and intelligence capacity, but we must also encourage, and where possible, provide development, humanitarian and technical assistance. This should be done through existing organizations such as the UN, the Friends of Yemen process, World Bank, IMF and the international and regional donor community. The assignment of political, economic and social reform metrics is essential to proper distribution and application of assistance. A long-term whole of government commitment to Yemen and its people, especially activities that assist Yemen in providing good governance and services to its people, will be most effective in bolstering government capacity, increasing stability and denying havens to extremists.

Al Qaeda and Associated Groups

Within the CENTCOM AOR, where do you consider the greatest terrorist threats from al Qaeda and al Qaeda-affiliated groups to be located?

The greatest al Qaeda and al Qaeda-affiliated terrorist threats emanate from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen.

Which of these threats do you believe constitute the highest priority for efforts to counter al Qaeda's influence and eliminate safe havens for al Qaeda and affiliated groups?

Pakistan's tribal areas remain the greatest danger as these areas are strategic footholds for al Qaeda and its Senior Leaders, including Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. From Islamabad to New York, from east Africa to Europe, this area has hatched al Qaeda's murderous designs. Although al Qaeda Senior Leaders are under considerably more pressure in Pakistan than in previous years, the tribal areas of Pakistan remain key to extremist efforts to rally Muslim resistance worldwide. The tribal areas are home to al

Qaeda training and media hubs, which al Qaeda uses to maintain relevance in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and globally as well. Additionally, the tribal areas provide a haven to formulate attack plans and disseminate propaganda. However, al Qaeda tactical support to insurgents and extremists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen from the tribal areas is minimal, with most of the actual fighting done by groups such as the Afghanistan Taliban, Tehrik-e Taliban, Haqqani, “al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” and more recently, al Shabaab.

Former Soviet Union States

Several former Soviet states have played roles in supporting the U.S. and coalition forces.

What is your assessment of current U.S. military relationships with these nations, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan?

My assessment is that in Central Asia, US Central Command has 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, US Central Command is reaching out to Turkmenistan, advancing our partnerships in Central Asia, doing so transparently to avoid any misunderstanding of our motives.

What security challenges do you see in this portion of the CENTCOM AOR?

Narcotics, arms trafficking, and smuggling are transnational threats in the region. These threaten legitimate commerce and the flow of strategic resources, damage societies, and often benefit terrorist networks. The proliferation of material for weapons of mass destruction, associated delivery systems and the spread of technical expertise is another concern in the region.

Following through on US commitments to sustaining and securing prosperous and capable governments in this region will contribute immensely to the security of the Central Asian countries, especially those immediately bordering Afghanistan. Al Qaeda and its associated violent extremist organizations are, of course, the highest-priority terrorist threats to the states in the region, as well as to the US and many of our allies around the world. There is considerable concern about the lack of sustainable economic development, which translates into a serious security concern, for without economic opportunity, poor and disenfranchised communities can serve as hotbeds for the spread of violent extremism. The countries of Central Asia offer abundant opportunities for building security and economic partnerships and for pursuing common interests.

Somalia

While CENTCOM has the lead for counter piracy operations off the coast of Somalia, U.S. Africa Command has the lead for any military operations in Somalia.

If confirmed, how do you envision managing this critical seam between the two geographic combatant commands?

A range of mechanisms are already in place to mitigate this critical seam, not just for counter piracy operations, but for littoral security, illicit trafficking, combating militancy, and developing partner capacity. Several standing Memoranda of Understanding between the two COCOMs regulate shared operational concerns; the respective staffs maintain close working relationships; and embedded personnel are exchanged regularly. If confirmed, I would assess whether these mechanisms are in fact sufficient or need to be enhanced. Further, I will ensure all diplomatic, AFRICOM and CENTCOM efforts are characterized by a strong spirit of collaboration on my part.

What impact, if any, does Somalia have on the CENTCOM AOR?

Somalia is a haven which has allowed a number of al Qaeda individuals, and the al-Qaeda associated insurgent group al-Shabaab, to operate a continuously active training camp program which constitutes a threat to the Transitional Federal Government and to the region in general. Lack of governance allows piracy to thrive, with attendant demand on US Central Command maritime assets. Additionally, Somali refugees in Yemen complicate Yemeni Government efforts to achieve stability and good governance.

Counter Piracy Operations off the Coast of Somalia

In the past two years, there have been a disturbing number of pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia – some ending in death and others ending in the payment of ransom. The shipping lanes off the coast of Somalia are some of the most economically and strategically important in the world. CENTCOM is now well into its second year of the counter piracy mission off the coast of Somalia.

What is your assessment of the mission thus far?

The effort of the international community is yielding positive results in the Gulf of Aden (GOA), where attacks have decreased since their spike in 2008. Concerned governments, agencies, militaries and the international maritime community meet regularly to address the evolving challenges of piracy. The increase in international presence and continued encouragement of the merchant community to adopt best practices has helped to stem the tide of piracy. Pirates, however, continue to adapt to the pressures of the international community by modifying their operating areas and tactics. If I am confirmed, I will continue to work with international partners to ensure our practices adapt faster than those of pirates and recommend, where needed, modifications to current international laws that may hinder our efforts.

In your opinion, how long should we continue the current mission as constituted and at what point should we consider a change to the strategy?

The mission should continue as long as it supports US and international objectives for countering piracy. If I am confirmed, US Central Command will continually assess our whole of governments strategy and make recommendations to our partners where needed to checkmate this dangerous, disruptive activity.

In your opinion, what is the most appropriate maritime strategy in this region of the world, given the threats of weapons trafficking, human trafficking, and piracy?

Our most appropriate maritime strategy is to build international collaboration. U.S. Maritime presence in international waters is an enduring influence and can, in league with other concerned nations, deter the ambitions of regional aggressors, prevent illicit activity, foster and sustain cooperative relationships, and prevent or mitigate disruptions and threats. We need to encourage regional states to have their own capacity to govern their territorial waters and exert that governance into the international waters beyond their territories.

Israel

While Israel is not part of the CENTCOM AOR, it does play a role in the Command's AOR.

In your assessment, what are the most significant threats facing Israel in the Middle East?

Although Israel is not in the US Central Command region, progress in the Middle East Peace Process has an effect on advancing US interests in the region. With respect to the threats Israel faces, the gravest is the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. Iran's nuclear weapons program, it should be noted, confronts many nations in CENTCOM's AOR with the same threat. Despite significant pressure from the international community, the Iranian regime continues to take steps that are seen by many to be associated with the development of a nuclear-weapons program. Because the Iranian nuclear-weapons program would not only present a threat to Israel but would also present a threat to our partners in the region and to the interests of the United States, we must work closely with many nations to check the Iranian efforts to threaten and destabilize the region. Other significant threats include a combination of Iranian and Syrian proxy elements, Lebanese Hezbollah, and Palestinian rejectionists such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

The Iraq Study Group report suggested that one of the most significant hurdles to broader stability in the Middle East was a final status agreement between the Israeli and Palestinian governments.

Do you agree with this conclusion of the Iraq Study Group? Please explain your

answer.

Clearly this conflict has an enormous effect on the region and sets the strategic context within which USCENTCOM operates. Specifically, the conflict enables state sponsored terrorism and instability in our region by providing a common enemy for extremist ideological propaganda. Additionally, regional stability would be significantly enhanced if we could garner greater cooperation within the region between Arab and Israeli governments on mutual security concerns like the Iranian nuclear program. However, moderate governments in our region are not likely to step out and begin cooperative engagement with Israel until this issue is resolved.

Egypt

Despite being on the African continent, Egypt remains within the CENTCOM AOR. Egypt has been criticized for its perceived failure to act along the Egypt-Gaza border to counter the smuggling threat posed by cross-border tunnels. Egypt has also played an important role, however, in ensuring peace on the southern border of Israel.

What is your assessment of the role Egypt plays with respect to regional stability?

Egypt continues efforts to maintain and enhance stability in the Middle East though Cairo's leadership role has changed since the days of Camp David. In the past two decades, the Gulf States have gained prominence politically and militarily largely through oil revenue. Egypt has looked inward in some respects in recent years, while remaining focused on Israel, the Nile Basin, and Africa writ large. Egypt has been less engaged, by comparison, with the rest of the Middle East. Today, Egypt rarely deploys its forces to any of its Middle Eastern neighbors for bilateral and multilateral exercises, though its moral weight and leadership role can still be felt throughout the region.

Egypt's role on the African continent continues to ascend. Including the Nile Basin, Egypt regularly deploys hard and soft power across Africa. Recent examples include peacekeepers in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Egyptian diplomats are actively engaged in the conflict between North and South Sudan, the ongoing disputes over Western Sahara, and in the Horn of Africa between Ethiopia, Somalia and the separatist movements within Somaliland.

What is your assessment of the U.S.-Egyptian military-to-military relationship?

Egypt receives the second largest allocation of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) at \$1.3 billion. Egypt remains sensitive over US conditions on FMF spending, and concerned over a perceived imbalance between Egypt and Israel.

Egypt has capitalized on international military education training for three decades, including the professional development of many of Egypt's next generation of senior leaders. Egypt's biennial multilateral BRIGHT STAR exercise now involves modern threat scenarios linking together all participants. I view these positive trends as an

opportunity for Egypt to continue to strengthen its traditional role as a key player in regional affairs and stability.

United Nations Peacekeeping Missions

Within the CENTCOM AOR there are three U.N. peacekeeping operations. The United States contributes financially to all of these missions and on a limited case-by-case basis provides U.S. military personnel in the form of military observers or staff officers. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, in response to advanced policy questions to the Committee indicated that “[United Nations] peacekeepers help promote stability and help reduce the risks that major U.S. military interventions may be required to restore stability in a country or region. Therefore, the success of these operations is very much in our national interest.” Further, as stated in the most recent Quadrennial Defense Review, “America's power and influence are enhanced by . . . maintaining interactions with important international institutions such as the United Nations.” In testimony before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives on July 29, 2009, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. stated that the United States “is willing to consider directly contributing more military observers, military staff officers, civilian police, and other civilian personnel--including more women I should note--to U.N. peacekeeping operations.”

In your view, would an increase in the number of U.S. military personnel assigned to U.N. peacekeeping missions in the CENTCOM AOR help you advance the theater campaign plan?

While this is not an issue that I am ready to fully assess as I am not the Commander, US Central Command, there are many important factors to balance in making such an assessment, including the ongoing US military commitments and engagements in the area and perceptions in the AOR that would result from an increase in US Peacekeepers. I would need to study the issue further to ensure we did not address one issue but inadvertently create additional issues.

If confirmed, what would be your intentions regarding support to peacekeeping missions in the CENTCOM AOR?

I would continue the current levels of support to the international forces operating in the US Central Command region, closely coordinating all efforts through the Joint Staff and policy experts to maintain stability and impartiality in this part of the world. US activities in the area support UN objectives, especially in promoting peace and stability in the region. An example of that is the CENTCOM support provided to the Lebanese Armed Forces, increasing their capabilities and capacities. I would also welcome reviews that examine where efficiencies may be realized in those peacekeeping missions.

Lebanon

Over the past five years, the United States has provided over \$500 million in

security assistance to the Government of Lebanon.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for CENTCOM in Lebanon?

The component of US Central Command partner with the Lebanese Armed Forces at the operational level and below to develop capabilities that build forces to maintain internal stability and protect borders. I support and, if confirmed, will continue to drive US Central Command partnership with the Lebanese Armed Forces in developing the following seven capabilities: border defense and security, close air support and precision delivery, special operations, establishment of a national defense secure-communications architecture, enhanced protected mobility, improved military training system and facilities, and development of a military logistics support architecture. This will not be a quick process, but Central Command and Lebanon have a mutually-agreed upon framework by which we can program our investment, exercises, activities, and engagements.

What are the U.S. national security interests in Lebanon?

In my view, our interests in Lebanon are twofold. First, we must help Lebanon maintain a democratic government with fair representation from each of Lebanon's eighteen confessionals. Our second interest is Lebanon's sovereignty, which is challenged by the destabilizing activities of Hezbollah.

The current coalition government in Lebanon includes Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization under U.S. law.

Given the involvement of Hezbollah in the Lebanese government, what do you believe to be the appropriate level of engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces?

US Central Command's engagements should be primarily focused at the operational level and below with the Lebanese Armed Forces, consistent with established U.S. policy. Our current focus on mutually developing the Lebanon's capabilities (described above) is the means to accomplish this end.

Do you believe the focus of U.S. security assistance should be on building the counterterrorism capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces or more broadly focused on building the institution of the Lebanese Armed Forces writ large?

The Lebanese Armed Forces remains a functionally apolitical institution. I believe it would be productive to focus broadly on building capabilities in the Lebanese Armed Forces to provide an even-handed counterweight to the influences of Syria and Hezbollah. Appropriately, counterterrorism is one of the Lebanese Armed Forces' four stated missions, along with defending and securing its borders, providing internal security and stability, and supporting social development. If confirmed, I intend to continue the US Central Command focus on developing capabilities within and across each mission to include the use of Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, Section 1206 funding, and other security assistance investments.

A strong and effective Lebanese Armed Forces provides a pillar of stability for the Government of Lebanon and its citizens to lean upon, as demonstrated in the 2007 Nahr al-Bared conflict. Due in part to US Central Command's security assistance being distributed broadly across the Lebanese Armed Forces, these forces had the resources and expertise to conduct this operation which effectively integrated elements across each of its four missions.

Saudi Arabia

What is your assessment of the U.S.-Saudi military-to-military relationship? What are the pluses and minuses of this relationship?

It is my assessment that the US-Saudi Arabia military relationship is strong. Since 2008, the US has expanded cooperation with the Saudi Arabian security establishment, adding to an already robust security cooperation program. US Central Command established an Office of Program Management to train, equip, and advise the Saudi security forces that protect Saudi Arabia's critical energy infrastructure. It is important to our national interests that we continue to engage broadly with the Saudi military and to strengthen our cooperation in such vital areas as air and missile defense, ballistic missile early warning, critical infrastructure protection, and our efforts to degrade and disrupt extremist elements in the region.

The scale of Saudi Arabian capacity provides significant opportunity for large-scale combined exercises like RED FLAG and the FRIENDSHIP series as well as large numbers of other bilateral engagements. The Saudis have expended great effort in expanding participation in regional military exercises and programs such as the annual EAGLE RESOLVE and BRIGHT STAR exercises.

Moreover, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a powerful influence in the region that is committed to defeating Al Qaeda and its effective program for reintegration of dissidents serve as valuable models for other states in the region. An increasingly shared appreciation of the enemy threats to regional stability gives me confidence that we have a solid basis for even stronger mil-to-mil cooperation in the future.

In your assessment what threat does a more regionally assertive Iran, including the possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran, pose to Saudi Arabia?

Having not served as Commander of US Central Command, I am not intimately familiar with Saudi security concerns, though I recognize the Kingdom's concerns about Iranian malign activities in the region. While King Abdullah has played a positive role through the inter-faith dialogue, Arab Peace Initiative, and warming of relations with Syria, there continues to be negative Iranian interference in Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories. Saudi leadership has made it clear that a nuclear-armed Iran is incompatible with regional stability and a grave threat to Saudi strategic interests. Saudi Arabia is

committed to open and transparent use of civilian nuclear technology; however a nuclear-armed Iran will cause a Saudi reassessment of this policy.

Communications Capabilities

The CENTCOM AOR is heavily dependent on timely and reliable communications capabilities including satellite based communications to support troops directly as well as a variety of ISR and related capabilities.

In your view are there any gaps or deficiencies in communications capabilities that should or could be improved?

I have a great appreciation for the role that communication capabilities play in today's operating environment. If confirmed, I will carry forward broad priorities to address any assessed gaps or deficiencies in this area, and I will work to increasing network capacity by tier (terrestrial, air, space); become more effective and efficient with existing capacity; increase information sharing – enabling the “need to share” approach; and in Afghanistan moving the fight to the coalition network (Afghanistan Mission Network).

The Afghanistan Ministry of Telecommunications is attempting to complete a fiber-optic cable backbone both around Kabul and the Ring Road, with international extensions to Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran. If this network were fully operational, DOD could shift a lot of traffic from expensive satellite communications to fiber, which would save money, provide more bandwidth, and inject funds into Afghanistan. However, the fiber-optic backbone installation is mired down in precisely the areas where it is most needed – from Kabul to Pakistan, and from Kabul through the Pashtun belt in the South to Kandahar and beyond towards Herat. Moreover, the contracts for this backbone have been let to Chinese and Iranian firms. Elements of the U.S. Government now believe that, with a concerted U.S. effort and assistance, this network could soon be completed and executed in partnership with U.S., Afghan, and other companies.

What is your understanding of this situation?

Having not been confirmed as Commander, US Central Command, I am not in a position to comment extensively on this highly important, yet technical topic. If confirmed, I will consult with COMISAF and the communications directorate to determine the best way forward.

Are there other opportunities to improve communications networks in Afghanistan that would serve our counterinsurgency strategy, provide better communications services to our forces operating there, and contribute to Afghanistan's governance?

I have thought about these issues at length as part of the development of the Army and Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Manual, and I believe there are opportunities to enhance to the Company and platoon level, with extension to the mobile trooper. We can also

enable greater flexibility and versatility in coalition task organization. This requires a change to the existing coalition network norm and forces the fight to move to the recently fielded coalition network.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Capabilities

General McChrystal often stated that in his opinion there could never be enough ISR capability.

What are your views regarding the level of ISR support deployed thus far to Afghanistan?

Due to the nature of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, ISR demand will always exceed ISR capacity. As I understand from my current position, there is a substantial amount of ISR support in Afghanistan today, heavily reinforced by Secretary Gates in response to theater requirements. I will be acutely aware of and responsive to any shortfalls that are identified in Afghanistan, if I am confirmed, and I will work to resource my commanders in the field appropriately.

What are the specific capabilities that you think we are short of and that may need attention?

Assessments consistently demonstrate that Full Motion Video (FMV), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Ground Moving Target Indicator (GMTI) collection capacity, communications, and Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination (PED) capacity remain the greatest shortfalls.

I understand that the ISR Task Force has been extremely effective at focusing efforts and funding toward the US Central Command's highest urgent operational needs. Continued funding is essential to maximizing ISR effectiveness through better collection management tools, increased PED capability and capacity, and expanded architecture capacity. Real time, Wide Area Surveillance is also being pursued on an urgent timeline.

Major General Flynn, the NATO ISAF J2, late last year published a sharp critique on the Intelligence Community's (IC) response to the shift to a counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. He stated that the IC was too focused on identifying enemy forces and supporting kinetic operations against them and was not providing critical information on the people that the counterinsurgency strategy needed to protect and win over.

Do you think that General Flynn's complaint remains valid, or have the national and military intelligence community adequately adjusted its priorities and improved its support for the counterinsurgency strategy? Where are we still deficient?

Counterinsurgency is predicated on intelligence and information collection, which requires an accelerated and adaptive approach. The intelligence community has taken key steps to better understand the conflict and react to emerging opportunities to influence its

trajectory. If confirmed, I will work closely with COMISAF to ensure we close any existing gaps in our joint interagency intelligence capabilities, and work collaboratively with the Service chiefs to ensure they understand the theater demands on the forces that they are organizing, training and equipping.

Regional Ballistic Missile Threats and Response

Iran has hundreds of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles today that are capable of reaching forward-deployed U.S. forces, allies, and other friendly nations in the CENTCOM AOR. Syria also has an inventory of ballistic missiles that pose a threat to the region. The Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report of February 2010 stated that the United States intends to pursue a Phased Adaptive Approach to ballistic missile defense against such missile threats in various regions, including the Middle East.

Do you agree that such a phased adaptive approach will provide CENTCOM with the missile defense capabilities needed to defend our forward deployed forces and our allies and partners in the region?

Yes. The Phased Adaptive Approach framework can be applied in US Central Command and supports building strong cooperative relationships, appropriate country burden sharing, and missile defenses tailored to the threats in the US Central Command Region.

What role do you see for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system with Standard Missile – 3 interceptors in U.S. missile defense capabilities in the CENTCOM AOR?

The Aegis BMD system is one of the critical components in the US integrated layered missile defense architecture, which is designed to check regional threats, including Iran's Shahab 3 and Ashura missiles. When outfitted with the SM-3 interceptor missile the Aegis weapons system offers an upper-tier layer to our missile defense capability.

In addition to U.S. missile defense capabilities in the CENTCOM AOR, what role do you see for other nations in the AOR to contribute to regional missile defense capabilities, such as UAE interest in purchasing the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system?

I am aware that US Central Command partner nations have shared their perception that Iran is posing a threat to them with its ballistic missile capabilities. US Central Command is seeking to strengthen deterrence against this challenge by working agreements with partner nations to bring their BMD assets into a regional architecture. The primary purpose is for individual sovereign defense with a secondary purpose of integrating into a common defense. The purchase of US BMD systems, to include THAAD, enables not only integration but interoperability into a regional BMD architecture.

CENTCOM and DOD Global Posture Review

According to the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, DOD will conduct a

global posture review that assesses U.S. strategic relationships and interests to identify where and at what levels the forward stationing of military forces supports those relationships and interests.

What is your assessment of the current and future strategic requirement for U.S. military basing and pre-positioning in the Persian Gulf region?

In my current position as Commander, Joint Forces Command, I recognize the essential requirements to develop the forces, bases, and agreements necessary to ensure capabilities and access are available to meet current and future operational requirements. We need to ensure that our investments in infrastructure and capabilities are consistent with our long-term objectives for the region. To meet these challenges, we must continue to work with regional partners to maintain access, freedom of action, and capabilities at existing and new locations across the region. Doing so will improve our strategic depth, allow for rapid increases in operational surge requirements, and support our partners in the region, many of which have stood by us for decades.

In addition, pre-positioned equipment and material will enable the rapid deployment of selected forces to respond to a variety of requirements, from humanitarian assistance to combat operations. Pre-positioning also signals US commitment to regional partners. This requires restoring pre-positioned equipment stocks to full capacity. If confirmed, US Central Command will partner with the Services to address any capability gaps to meet theater and global contingency requirements within a resource constrained environment.

In your view, what capabilities and facilities will be most critical to the CENTCOM mission after the withdrawal from Iraq is completed?

The posture of US forces, currently tailored towards on-going operations, must transition over time to balance requirements for contingency operations and crisis response. If confirmed, I will ensure that US Central Command continues to develop a defense posture and regional security architecture focused on strengthening our partners' national and regional defense capabilities and advancing regional stability and security. I understand that US Central Command has identified several theater enduring support locations to meet these requirements, including 1 main operating base, 6 forward operating sites, and 17 cooperative security locations.

In addition to theater locations, US Central Command must continue to work with regional partners to secure adequate en route infrastructure, intermodal capacity, and global mobility for enhanced redundancy. This will require extensive cooperation between combatant commanders to further develop en route mobility from Europe, Africa, and the Caucasus into the Gulf region and Central and South Asia.

What is your view of arguments that an over-the-horizon presence would reduce tensions in the region?

US military posture in the US Central Command region must support on-going operations,

prevent and deter conflict, and provide options to respond to a wide range of contingencies. Our deterrent ability is founded on the presence of land, air, and naval forces in the region capable of fighting limited and large-scale conflicts where anti-access weaponry and tactics are used by state and non-state actors. If I am confirmed, US Central Command will continue efforts to respond to a wide variety of contingency scenarios, including defeating aggression by adversary states, supporting and stabilizing fragile states facing serious internal threats, and providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

I understand that US Central Command employs two enduring principles: (1) minimize steady state force presence by relying on rotational forces, reach back capabilities, and repositioning to meet requirements; and (2) maximize the use of maritime assets to provide operational flexibility, increase freedom of action, and minimize land based footprint. While enduring force presence at regional locations may not always be available or preferred, the need for access, freedom of action, and in place capacity and facilities will be required to enable the rapid flow of forces to those locations.

Treatment of Detainees

Section 1403 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 provides that no individual in the custody or under the physical control of the United States Government, regardless of nationality or physical location shall be subject to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

If confirmed, will you take steps to ensure that all relevant DOD directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures applicable to U.S. forces in Afghanistan fully comply with the requirements of section 1403 and with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

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

Yes.

Do you believe it is consistent with effective counterinsurgency operations for US forces to comply fully with the requirements of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes. We have a legal and moral obligation to treat persons under our control humanely, to comply fully with Common Article 3 as construed and applied by U.S. Law and policy. It is not only the right thing to do; it is also an important component of successful counter-insurgency operations.

How would you ensure a climate that not only discourages the abuse of detainees, but that encourages the reporting of abuse?

If I am confirmed, I will continue to set forth clear standards and expectations and demonstrate to the troops that we are committed to those standards. We will provide clear guidance at every level of command, proper training, and prompt and effective action when we don't meet our standards. Additionally, we will continue conducting thorough inspections of all detention facilities and programs throughout the theater of operations, and we will continue to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross. This is consistent with U.S. military policy on treatment of detainees since General George Washington commanded our troops and I am committed to no abuse of detainees.

Joint Task Force 435 in Afghanistan is working with the U.S. Embassy to address detention operations and rule of law issues. Concerns have been raised over the capacity and willingness of the Government of Afghanistan to detain and prosecute individuals detained in operations, particularly in the south.

What is your assessment of detention operations in Afghanistan and how do these operations contribute to the overall counterinsurgency strategy?

Though I am not confirmed as Commander, US Central Command, I have been able to track this issue closely, and I am pleased with the progress that USFOR-A has made in regard to detention operations in Afghanistan. The opening of the new detention facility in Parwan, coupled with the formation of Joint Task Force 435, has ensured oversight over detainee operations and detainees in U.S. custody. With the new facility comes ample room and opportunity to provide several programs to help detainees reintegrate into Afghan society upon their release. These new programs include basic education classes that teach reading, writing and math skills as well as vocational programs such as bakery and carpentry to teach detainees a skill. The programs offered by JTF 435 also provide for the de-radicalization of certain detainees by providing moderate religious classes and discussions with local Imams.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you recommend for addressing detention operations and rule of law issues in Afghanistan?

I am generally supportive of steps toward establishing the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 (CJIATF-435) that will centralize all USFOR-A detention, interrogation, and Rule of Law functions in Afghanistan. CJIATF 435 will help build capacity in the Afghan government, including establishing a command element capable of coordinating coalition efforts with the Afghanistan Government.

This will ultimately help the Afghan Government build the capacity to conduct safe, secure, lawful and humane detention operations including appropriate facilities and a fully trained Afghan guard force. There is also a need to ensure effective programs are in place for reintegrating detainees who are suitable candidates for release and ensure effective processes for investigating and prosecuting detainees for violations of Afghan criminal law.

This effort is well underway and, if confirmed, I would follow implementation closely, and work with Commander USFOR-A and Commander CJIAF 435 to make adjustments where appropriate.

Traumatic Brain Injury

On June 21, 2010, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a new DOD-wide policy on the management of mild traumatic brain injury in deployed settings.

If confirmed, how will you ensure that the policy is implemented consistently throughout the CENTCOM AOR?

IED's and the associated injuries are signature aspects of this war. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure appropriate command emphasis is placed on this crucial effort to identify, evaluate and manage all Service members exposed to potential concussive events. Defense Department policy provides specific direction to line leaders and medical personnel in their response to defined events – such as blasts – in the deployed environment which could result in mild traumatic brain injury/concussion, and US Central Command has supplemented this policy with its own implementation order, which I will review and maintain if confirmed. In addition, US Central Command has developed a single, joint solution to the tracking requirement for such exposures. This will provide a mechanism to ensure execution of proper evaluation, post-event rest period, and future evaluation, especially for those exposed to multiple events.

Mental Health Assessments and Treatment in Theater

The Army's Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) has made six separate assessments over the past several years detailing the immediate effects of combat on mental health conditions of U.S. soldiers and marines deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The most recent study, MHAT VI, found that "soldiers on their third and fourth deployment report lower morale and more mental health problems," and that stigma continues to prevent some soldiers from seeking mental health care. These types of reports lend support to the fact that increasing numbers of troops are returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan with posttraumatic stress, depression, and other mental health problems.

What is your understanding of the key findings of this and previous MHAT assessments, actions taken by the services to address key findings, and the effect of such actions?

In my current position, I am charged with training and preparing joint forces to serve downrange, and I consider it among my highest responsibilities to monitor and take care of the mental health of these men and women. I find the MHAT results encouraging in some respects, but there is still room for significant improvement.

During the 3rd quarter of FY09, MHAT IV reported that 21% of maneuver Soldiers and Marines met screening criteria for depression, anxiety, or acute stress. Historically these

numbers are similar to 2007, yet higher than 2005. Unit morale was reported as lower than in previous MHATs. Marital problems among junior enlisted and support/sustainment Soldiers and Marines were higher, as well as mental health and marital problems among NCOs on three or more deployment. The MHAT team recommended adding behavioral health (BH) personnel to meet the recommended ratio for 1 BH per 700 Service members, maintaining the ratio through the surge in forces, and appointing a senior theater-wide BH consultant.

These recommendations have been implemented in theater since the last MHAT. The impact of these actions has been positive thus far, and will continue to be evaluated by the joint team under MHAT-7. I also want to take advantage of the US Army's advances, under the guidance of Brigadier General Rhonda Cornum, in strengthening the resilience of all troops deploying to the CENTCOM combat zones.

Do you have any views on how to best address the mental health needs of our troops in theater, in terms of both prevention and treatment?

Addressing mental health, as in addressing physical health, cannot begin in theater – it must begin at home. This is accomplished by the Services through their various mental health support functions, resiliency training and provision of mental health services. In the pre-deployment period, individuals are screened for potential mental health problems, conditions or concerns. Individuals, who have specific behavioral health conditions that require specific treatments, and have not demonstrated adequate resolution of their behavioral health condition or symptoms, are not permitted to deploy.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of mental health prevention and treatment for our Service members. This will require adequate provisions and access to behavioral health, the proper command emphasis, de-stigmatization, and positive officer leadership throughout the life-cycle of a deployment (pre, during, and post) in order to maintain combat resilient units. Brigadier General Cornum and the Army's efforts in this regard provide pragmatic steps to improve resilience for our young troops going into harm's way.

Do you believe that mental health resources in theater are adequate to handle the needs of our deployed service members?

Yes. Based on my experience at US Joint Forces Command, I believe that current mental health resources are adequate to handle the needs of our deployed Service members. The MHAT-7 Team, which has just deployed to Afghanistan, will independently evaluate this. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Services and our deployed behavioral health resources to identify and eliminate any barriers to care, especially among maneuver units where stigma has been found to be higher. While there is no room for complacency on our efforts to fully resource mental health support, we have made unmistakable progress.

If confirmed, would you request additional behavioral health resources from the services, if needed, to meet the needs of current and future units deployed to Iraq

and Afghanistan?

If additional behavioral health resources were deemed necessary, either by our own assessment or that of the MHAT-7, I would not hesitate to request such resources from the Services to fill any identified gaps. USCENTCOM, its components and the Services, are all dedicated to ensuring the adequate provision of behavioral health resources to support our deployed Warfighters.

Suicide Prevention

The numbers of suicides in each of the services continue to increase. A number of these military suicides are committed in theater.

If confirmed, what resources would you use to help prevent suicides in theater and to prepare redeploying service members for transition to life back at home?

Prevention of suicide in theater and at home is a vital priority – the safety of all deploying, deployed, and returning service members is always foremost among my priorities.

Confronting the difficult reality of suicide in the force requires regularly exercising a broad complement of health resources within fully supportive command culture. This process begins with recognizing the importance of taking care of people, which will always remain the most important asset in our military. There are many elements and separate suicide prevention initiatives that comprise a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention, including embedded and organic behavioral health care assets “in country,” programs run by the Services, pre- and post-deployment “eye-to-eye” screening, alliance partnerships, and a host of other prevention, treatment, and care facilities. It is imperative that we implement these programs throughout the life cycle of the training and deployment so that service members can receive appropriate counseling, assistance, respite, and support.

Sexual Assault

If confirmed, you will be responsible for ensuring compliance with DOD policies on prevention of and response to sexual assaults against military personnel and civilians throughout the CENTCOM AOR.

What lessons have military leaders in Iraq and Afghanistan learned regarding sexual assault prevention, response, and reporting protocols that can be applied across the CENTCOM AOR?

Commanders have learned that they have the responsibility to establish a command climate where safety is promoted, service members are educated on sexual assault risk reduction techniques, and service members feel free to report incidents without stigma or recrimination. They have also learned that sexual assault is a safety risk and a crime, it is incompatible with our military values, and that it negatively impacts unit cohesion and mission accomplishment.

What are the unique issues that you believe need to be addressed to ensure that policies on prevention, reporting, medical treatment (including mental health care), and victim support are available for military personnel and civilians in the operational environments of Iraq and Afghanistan?

The unique issues that need to be addressed are a positive and supportive command climate, unit leadership that demonstrates intent to follow established policies, provision of caring assistance to victims of sexual assault, and firm disciplinary actions taken against offenders. In addressing each of these unique issues, commanders demonstrate that they are committed to preventing and reducing instances of sexual assault.

If confirmed, how would you assess the adequacy of such resources in the CENTCOM AOR?

Continued command emphasis and involvement will insure the adequacy of resources. One best practice from Iraq involves the regular meeting of a multidisciplinary team with representation from across the command, chaired by a General Officer. This provides the appropriate forum for sharing concerns, identifying issues, and taking immediate corrective action.

Deployed Civilians in the CENTCOM AOR

The President has called on all agencies of the executive branch to encourage the assignment of highly qualified federal civilian employees in support of CENTCOM operations, and DOD provides the majority of those employees.

If confirmed, what would be your objectives for improving and sustaining the support of federal civilians in the CENTCOM AOR?

If I am confirmed, US Central Command will continue to maintain the relationship we have developed with the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy (CPP) as it continues its implementation of the Civilian Expeditionary Workforce (CEW) program. During the past year, CPP has permanently transferred a Senior Human Resource CEW Program Manager to provide advisory services on compensation, benefits, medical care and entitlements, and more importantly, to be involved in the planning for mobilization of highly qualified civilian talent. I understand that the assignment of this billet to US Central Command has already brought dividends, producing a 166% increase in the number of DoD civilians augmenting our military forces across Iraq and Afghanistan since March 2009.

US Central Command has found that leveraging the expertise and the skill sets of highly qualified DoD civilians improves operational effectiveness and helps reduce demand on the uniformed force. As such, I would endorse the Department's efforts to provide deployed civilians with uniform, fair and transparent incentives, and benefits that will enable us to further increase the use of a ready and able source of quality manpower.

Intelligence Support for Indirect Activities

Some observers contend that the national intelligence agencies focus their assistance to the Defense Department in Afghanistan and Iraq on special operators engaged in direct action operations. As a consequence, it is alleged, general purpose forces and special operations forces engaged in indirect activities, including foreign internal defense and population protection, receive less intelligence support.

If confirmed, how would you ensure special operations forces engaged in indirect activities receive adequate intelligence support?

Our special operations forces require precise targeting data to be effective. Intelligence, especially ISR support, is allocated based upon theater requirements (to include requirements to support general purpose forces and special operations forces engaged in indirect activities) that are balanced against existing capabilities and capacity. If confirmed, I will work to expand intelligence and information sharing across the entire enterprise – especially technology that will help to ensure the effectiveness of our special operators. At the same time, integrated special operations with general purpose force operations are key to success in this sort of war. A mission-oriented balance is my vision.

Special Operations Forces in Support of Country Teams

U.S. Special Operations Command deploys personnel to work with country teams in a number of priority countries where the United States is not engaged in direct action operations, but rather trying to stop the spread of violent extremism. Their mission is to support the priorities of the Ambassador and the geographic combatant commander's theater campaign plan against terrorist networks.

Please describe the potential value of these special operations personnel to CENTCOM and the country teams they are supporting.

The limited visibility profiles, professional maturity and self-sufficiency of SOF provide unique capabilities to work within US Embassy country teams. They provide the Ambassador and Commander, US Central Command the flexibility required to execute security assistance programs in fluid and culturally diverse environments. Also, their expertise in understanding the complex issues of interagency and international cooperation provides additional leverage that may not otherwise be realized.

If confirmed, what do you intend to do to make sure the goals of special operations personnel deployed to these countries are closely aligned with those of the Ambassadors they are working with?

It is paramount that CENTCOM's military effort acts in unity and coordination with the Chief of Mission as the US Government lead. If confirmed, I would work to establish close working relationships with every US Ambassador in the region, and ensure that all

CENTCOM efforts – not just those of special operations personnel – align with their objectives.

Military Information Support Operations

Al Qaeda and affiliated violent extremist groups work hard to appeal to local populations. In several cases throughout the CENTCOM AOR, most recently in Yemen, these efforts have allowed violent extremists to establish a safe haven, conduct operations, and expand their recruiting base. The composition and size of these groups in comparison to the U.S. Government permits it to make policy decisions very quickly.

Do you believe CENTCOM and other agencies within the U.S. Government are appropriately organized to respond effectively to the messaging and influence efforts of al Qaeda and other affiliated terrorist groups?

Not yet, but we are getting there. There are several key elements critical to our achieving success in this aspect of operations: Alignment and synchronization of our activities; authorities to engage in countering violent extremist messaging; capacity, and funding. Communication integration is equally important in regards to the interagency – there must be a robust, aligned interagency communication effort, since the battle of the narrative is a whole-of-government problem.

US Central Command continues to refine our processes to ensure alignment and synchronization of all of communication activities, not only within the US Central Command Headquarters, but among all the components, the two Joint Operational Areas, and across the interagency. This includes public affairs, military information operations and key leader engagement. We are focused on improvements and, if confirmed, I anticipate I will be bringing more attention to this arena.

If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you explore or take to counter and delegitimize violent extremist ideologies?

If I am confirmed, I would continue to use Military Information Operations in coordination with our partners in the interagency to degrade the violent rhetoric of our enemy, particularly on the Internet. In addition, our public affairs operations should be fully engaged in the emerging media environments within the AOR, including the use of all available tools to engage in blogs and social media to be first with the truth and correct the record when our adversaries attack us with disinformation and propaganda. Finally, DoD and the Combatant Commands have a critical role in the interagency effort to counter violent extremists, and I will work to ensure our commanders retain the authorities they need to execute their missions.

Congressional Oversight

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

testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

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.