

**Advance Questions for General Paul J. Selva, USAF,
Nominee for the Position of Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

Defense Reforms

In connection with your recent nomination to be Commander, U.S. Transportation Command you answered the Committee's policy questions on the reforms brought about by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. You indicated that you did not see a need for modifications to Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions.

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

No.

In light of your experience as Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, do you see any need for modifications to Goldwater-Nichols? If so, what modifications do you believe would be appropriate?

No. I do not presently foresee the need to make any modifications to the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Duties

Based on your experience as Commander, U.S. Transportation Command, what recommendations, if any, do you have for changes in the duties and functions set forth in section 154 of title 10, United States Code, and in regulations of the Department of Defense, that pertain to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the organization and operation of the Joint Staff in general?

At present, I do not recommend changes to the law or regulations.

Joint Requirements Oversight Council

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC), which has the responsibility to review and validate Service requirements. Are there any recommendations that you would make to modify the JROC or its authority or the requirements process?

No, I do not believe any additional authorities or process changes required at this time.

Has the 'trip-wire' process, to bring troubled programs back to the JROC for a review and to consider performance trade-offs to mitigate further cost growth and/or schedule delays before the program faced a Nunn-McCurdy review, been regularly employed on large programs that have experienced significant cost growth and schedule delays?

Yes. The JROC “trip-wire” process was put in place to address potential program difficulties prior to triggering a Nunn-McCurdy breach and subsequent review. A 2012 Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) guidance update incorporated additional unit-cost criteria in order to address schedule and quantity trip-wire criteria. It has been employed on several occasions to review and adjust requirements on large programs when appropriate to avoid follow-on Nunn-McCurdy breach criteria.

Has the JROC altered requirements, either for performance or procurement quantities, as a result of such reviews?

Yes, the JROC has altered or revalidated requirements as a result of such reviews. Example programs include the warfighter information network – tactical (WIN-T), advanced anti-radiation guided missile, and the E-6B Block 1.

Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (WSARA) required the Secretary of Defense to ensure that trade-off analyses are conducted on cost, schedule, and performance as part of the requirements development and approval process. Such analyses enhance DOD’s understanding of what performance factors are the critical ones driving costs and schedules. What is your view of the modifications to the JROC process made by WSARA?

The modifications resulting from the 2009 WSARA have benefited JROC deliberations and the supporting JCIDS process. The continuing refinements to JCIDS, the most recent review and update completed in February 2015, ensure the continued focus on trade-off discussions and resulting requirements validation decisions.

What additional steps do you believe that Congress or DOD should take to ensure that trade-offs between cost, schedule, and performance objectives for major weapon systems are made at an appropriately early point in the acquisition process?

The Department routinely evaluates opportunities for trade-offs among cost, schedule, and performance for major weapons systems. As an example, in 2012 the Department revised the JCIDS instruction to ensure the JROC reviews a system’s Analysis of Alternatives (AOA) to inform and shape Milestone A activities. As further steps are warranted, I will adjust the JCIDS policy and process and work with USD(AT&L) accordingly.

Are there any other recommendations that you would make to modify the JROC or its authority or the requirements process?

No. At this time, I do not have any recommendations regarding modifications to the JROC or its authorities and the requirements process. If confirmed, I will continue to focus on the statutory responsibilities and authorities to ensure the appropriate rigor in validating realistic, technically achievable, prioritized, and cost informed requirements.

How would you assess the effectiveness of the JROC in the DOD acquisition process?

I would judge the effectiveness of the JROC by how successfully it works in coordination and partnership with the leaders and primary stakeholders in the requirements, acquisition, and resourcing processes to deliver capability to the warfighter within cost, schedule, and performance parameters. Over the past few years, the coordination between these processes and leaders has improved, and if confirmed, I intend to continue this close coordination.

What is your vision for the role and priorities of the JROC in the future?

My vision is for the JROC to play a key role in developing the future joint force by providing a rigorous requirements basis, consistent with statutory responsibilities, to aid senior leader decision-making. If confirmed, I will ensure the development of a superior joint force remains a priority.

Do you believe the JROC process is sufficient to understand and identify where there are opportunities for multi-service collaboration or where programs could or should be modified to take advantage of related acquisition programs?

Yes. One of the major responsibilities of the JROC process is to promote Service collaboration on joint requirements and raise awareness across the force on opportunities to modify or adapt related acquisition programs.

What principles guide your approach to inviting, and helping ensure the sufficient participation of other stakeholders in the JROC?

Inclusiveness and frank discussions of key issues will guide my approach in my role as the chair of the JROC and requirements process leader. The recently updated JROC charter details roles and responsibilities of the Council, its subordinate boards, and other organizations with equity in JCIDS.

The Senate Armed Services Committee's report to accompany the FY16 NDAA directs the Secretary of Defense to revalidate the total program of record buy quantity of each variant of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. How do you see the JROC's role in this revalidation process?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Service and Program Sponsor principals as well as the Department's acquisition professionals to assess and validate joint military requirements identified by Combatant Commanders. I will take a deliberate look at balancing the capacity and the capabilities of the future Joint Force, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program.

Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems (JCIDS)

What is your perspective on the responsiveness of the JCIDS process in addressing joint capabilities needs?

I believe JCIDS is very responsive when addressing joint capability needs, whether in the normal course of the deliberate review and validation lane or when evaluating joint urgent or joint emergent operational needs. In addition to having urgent/emergent lanes within the process, the requirements process is flexible and the timeline to review and validate requirements has been tailored for additional timeliness when necessary in the past. If confirmed, I will ensure it continues to be flexible in its execution when appropriate.

What level of involvement in the joint requirements process and the JROC do you believe is appropriate for the COCOMs?

I believe the combatant commands are key customers of, and stakeholders in, the requirements process. Combatant commands participate at every level, to include the JROC, Joint Capability Board, Functional Capability Boards and associated working groups. The recently updated JROC charter details the roles and responsibilities of the JROC, its subordinate boards, and other organizations with equity in JCIDS. If confirmed, I will ensure that combatant commands continue to play the appropriate role in the requirements process.

Do you think that JCIDS needs to be changed? If so, what are your views on the how it could be improved to make the process more responsive to users' needs while efficiently investing resources in a fiscally constrained budget environment?

No, not at this time. The Department recently updated JCIDS guidance documents and adjusted the JCIDDS process. If confirmed, I will monitor the changes put in place and adjust the process when and where necessary.

The requirements development process is not a stand-alone process, but instead is required to work collaboratively with the acquisition and budgeting processes. What steps are needed to better align the requirements development process with the acquisition and budgeting processes to make for a more efficient and effective process for delivering capabilities?

Continued collaboration between the requirements' process stakeholders and DoD leadership will be needed to more efficiently and effectively deliver capabilities to the war fighter. There have been substantial improvements in recent years, which if confirmed I intend to continue, such as quarterly leadership forums among the Vice Chairman, Under Secretary for AT&L, and Director of CAPE.

Acquisition Reform and Acquisition Management

What is your view of the changes made by the Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (WSARA)?

The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act (WSARA) of 2009 has been instrumental in avoiding the high cost of fixing problems late in the acquisition process. WSARA also jump-started acquisition reform within Department and initiated a mindset of continuous process improvement as exemplified by Secretary Carter's Better Buying Initiatives that I strongly endorse.

What role, if any, do you believe the JROC should play in the oversight and management of acquisition programs after requirements have been established?

I believe that the JROC continues to play a key role in requirements oversight and portfolio management, maintaining visibility into acquisition programs developing capability solutions to meet validated/established requirements. There may be cases where validated requirements need to be reviewed and revalidated based on new conditions such as technology challenges, fiscal constraints, or changes in the threat environment. If confirmed, I will ensure the requirements process remains flexible and responsive to address requirements reviews as needed.

What role if, any, do you believe the JROC should play in reviewing the progress of major defense acquisition programs or other acquisition programs?

The JROC already plays a role in reviewing the progress of major defense acquisition programs. The JROC considers the progress of programs in the yearly Chairman's Gap Assessment and Chairman's Program Recommendation. The JROC also receives yearly Portfolio Review assessments which include a review of major acquisition programs conducted by the Functional Capability Boards.

Do you see a need for any change in the role of the Chairman or the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the requirements determination, resource allocation, or acquisition management processes?

No, I do not see a need for any change.

What is your view of the role played by Configuration Steering Boards in preventing cost growth due to requirements creep?

When proactively utilized by the Service Acquisition Executive, Configuration Steering Boards have been highly effective in preventing cost-growth and identifying opportunities for requirements relief.

What do you see as the proper relationship between Configuration Steering Boards and the JROC in managing requirements for acquisition programs?

The Configuration Steering Boards (CSBs) are responsible for reviewing acquisition programs on a regular basis to address issues causing hurdles to their success in delivering capability to the warfighter. The CSBs should continue to propose requirements reviews/changes to the applicable requirements validation body, to include the JROC. If confirmed, I will ensure the requirements process remains flexible and responsive to address those CSB-recommended reviews/changes needing JROC validation in a timely manner.

What is your view of the Nunn-McCurdy requirements for Major Defense Acquisition Programs that fail to meet cost, schedule, and performance objectives?

I believe that the Nunn-McCurdy requirements for designated programs provide the necessary review for cost, schedule, and performance issues as needed.

What do you see as the proper relationship between the JROC and those DOD officials charged with implementing the Nunn-McCurdy requirements?

The JROC supports USD(AT&L) in the Nunn-McCurdy process as detailed in the statutory language. As the validation body, the JROC reviews the program requirements to determine whether program continuation is essential to national security. If confirmed, I will ensure the JROC and the JCIDS process continues to provide prompt and robust support to the Nunn-McCurdy process and the designated lead official.

Urgent Needs Processes

In your view, what specific steps should the Department take to better manage the joint urgent needs process?

I believe the Department has taken robust action over the past several years to better manage the joint urgent needs process. Examples are the updated JCIDS and acquisition guidance that governs the Joint Urgent Operational Needs (JUONs), Joint Emergent Operational Needs (JEONs), and component-specific urgent operational needs processes. Another example is the focus of the Warfighter Senior Integration Group (W-SIG) to facilitate delivery of solutions to validated JUONs/JEONs/component-specific urgent operational needs.

What is your sense of where the DOD might consolidate urgent needs entities and/or processes and how cost savings could be achieved through such consolidation?

My sense is that DoD is making good progress in consolidating urgent needs entities/processes and focusing remaining resources in improving delivery of validated urgent operational needs.

Do you believe that the Joint Staff should take steps to integrate the Joint Urgent Needs process with the individual services' processes? If so, please explain?

No. I believe there is an appropriate distinction between a component-specific urgent operational need and a Joint Urgent/Emergent Operational Need. If confirmed, I will maintain awareness of the processes and propose changes when and where appropriate.

Nuclear Weapons Council

If confirmed as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you will to serve as a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council.

What would your priorities be for the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC)?

Sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal is vital to ensuring our Nation's survival and central to the responsibilities of the NWC. I will work closely with the other NWC members to develop a plan for the Nuclear Enterprise to ensure the appropriate capabilities are available to sustain our nuclear arsenal for the long term.

Additionally, I will work with the other NWC members to modernize our aging nuclear facilities, invest in human capital, accelerate dismantlement of retired warheads, and improve our understanding of foreign nuclear weapons activities.

What changes if any would you recommend to the organization, structure, or function of the NWC?

USC Title 10 Section 179 sets forth the organization, structure and function of the NWC. While I am aware of the recent Congressional advisory panel that reported on this subject in detail, I have no recommendations at this time. However, if confirmed, I will work with the NWC chairman and other members to assess the organization, structure and function of the NWC, and where warranted, provide recommendations for change to increase effectiveness and value in support of the nuclear mission for national security.

Space Program Management

In many instances the military and intelligence space programs have experienced technical, budget, and schedule difficulties. In some instances these difficulties can be traced to problems with establishing realistic, clear, requirements and then maintaining control over the integrity of the requirements once established. If confirmed as chairman of the JROC you will be involved in determining these requirements. How in your view can or should the space systems requirements process be improved?

It is my understanding that in order to address the specific issue of space systems the Joint Capabilities Integration Development System (JCIDS) has been updated to allow for more trades between cost, performance, technology, and risk. If confirmed, I will continue to work with my

counterparts in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Office of the Secretary of Defense to ensure future space systems have robust and achievable requirements.

In general, space programs take many years to move from conception to launch. The result is that the technology in the satellites is significantly outdated by the time the satellites are launched and operational, which in turn, can lead to a decision to terminate a program early, and look to a newer technology. This vicious cycle results in significantly increased costs for space systems as sunk costs are never fully amortized. How in your view can this cycle be addressed?

I believe one means of minimizing the use of outdated technology is to allow for technology insertion points into the acquisition process, balanced with limits on any requirements creep that could possibly derail the capability from achieving its core functionality. This allows for newer technology to influence the development program at specific points in the procurement of the space system enterprise.

Nuclear Weapons

If confirmed you will continue to be a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council, and work closely with the National Nuclear Security Administration and its Stockpile Stewardship Program.

What, in your view, are the longer-term Stockpile Stewardship Program goals and what are the key elements that should be addressed from a DOD perspective?

Congress established the Stockpile Stewardship Program with the aim of creating the computational capabilities and experimental tools needed to enable the continued certification of the nuclear weapons stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable without the need for nuclear weapons explosive testing. The Secretaries of Defense and Energy are required by statute to certify annually to the Congress the safety, security, and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile.

I believe these goals are appropriate and the program is effective, as evidenced by our ability to certify the stockpile for over 20 years without the need for underground testing. That said, while the National Nuclear Security Administration has made significant investments in the tools and facilities that have made this possible, we must now leverage those investments and turn our attention to executing Life Extension Programs so we can sustain a safe, secure, and effective stockpile for the future. If confirmed, I will work across the interagency to ensure an appropriate balance between Life Extension Programs and science-based stockpile stewardship.

In your view is the Stockpile Stewardship Program providing the tools to ensure the safety, reliability, and security of the nuclear weapons stockpile without testing and if not what tools are needed?

Yes. I believe the Stockpile Stewardship Program provides the requisite tools, as attested to by the directors of the nuclear weapons design laboratories in their annual assessment letters.

Do you believe the Administration's 1251 report sets forth an appropriate road map for the modernization of the nuclear weapons complex and the strategic delivery systems?

Yes, the Administration's Section 1251 report describes an appropriate roadmap for ensuring the future safety, security, and reliability of the nuclear stockpile and associated delivery platforms, including the steps necessary to modernize the aging infrastructure of the nuclear weapons complex. This plan represents a strong commitment to the nuclear mission and is an important element of assurance that the U.S. deterrent remains strong. Additionally, this plan reflects the work of the Nuclear Weapons Council in developing a responsible and affordable long-term plan for the Nuclear Enterprise.

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

Yes, full funding of the 1251 report is a critical national security priority. The President's FY 2016 Budget Request includes a significant commitment from the Department of Defense to modernize the nuclear weapons complex and support the long-term plan for extending the life of our enduring stockpile. If confirmed, I will support the continued modernization and sustainment of our nuclear weapons delivery systems, stockpile, and infrastructure.

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

It is my view that any reductions in the numbers of deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, either strategic or non-strategic, would need to be negotiated in a manner that strengthens deterrence of potential adversaries, maintains strategic stability with Russia and China, and assures our allies and partners. The timing and size of reductions, if any, would have to be closely coupled to the status of the modernization effort. If confirmed, I will support the Department's continuing assessment of the proper force size and capabilities required for an effective nuclear deterrent.

Cybersecurity

The Senate Armed Services Committee's inquiry into U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) determined that TRANSCOM was subjected to many cyber intrusions that were not reported. TRANSCOM also suffered from a lack of awareness by other law enforcement and national security agencies regarding cyber intrusions on TRANSCOM contractors as well as misunderstandings by TRANSCOM personnel on the rules and processes for sharing cyber intrusion-related information with necessary officials.

Have you reviewed this report?

Yes, I have reviewed the report. Cybersecurity has long been a high priority for USTRANSCOM, and we immediately went to work to address the findings identified in the report.

What actions did TRANSCOM take in response to the Senate Armed Services Committee report's findings?

TRANSCOM worked with OSD and the Joint Staff to implement the recommendations. We established a Cyber Mission Analysis Task Force which used incident scenarios to refine the implementation actions. These actions included updating our critical contractors list and sharing it with the Defense Cyber Crime Center; enhancing our relationship with key mission partners, including the FBI and the DHS; encouraging our commercial partners to participate in the Defense Industrial Base Cybersecurity and Information Assurance Program; and engaging in professional associations, such as the National Defense Transportation Association. In addition, the command standardized cyber defense contracting language according to DoD acquisition guidelines and adopted widely-recognized standards from the National Institutes of Standards and Technology.

Do you feel that the Department of Defense is responding appropriately given recent events such as the threat nation intrusions into databases on US personnel including DOD employees?

Yes, I do. We continue to support key interagency partners in recovery and mitigation actions and we have increased our internal focus on strengthening cyber readiness and enforcing basic cyber hygiene. Additionally, protection of personal information has been part of our recurring operations security training for many years now. With respect to the recent intrusions, the Department has used a variety of means, including town hall meetings, to proactively inform our people how they can protect themselves from possible identity theft.

What actions do you plan to take, if confirmed, as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure that DOD reduces the risk of cyber intrusions?

If confirmed, I will continue the Department's partnership with other U.S. agencies to defend the U.S. Homeland and U.S. interests from cyber-attack. Foremost, the DoD must continue to implement current initiatives in the DoD Cyber Strategy, including developing a ready and capable Cyber Mission Force and associated cyber workforce. Next, we must continue to improve our network security architecture and shift the focus from protecting service-specific networks to securing the DoD enterprise in a unified manner through the deployment of the Joint Information Environment. Additionally, I will focus on requirements for new weapon systems to be designed and developed to operate and survive against capable cyber adversaries. Finally, because the DoD cannot guarantee that every cyberattack will be denied successfully, I will ensure our forces train to operate within a degraded cyber environment.

Do you believe that the current posture of the Department of Defense is sufficient to deter adversaries in cyberspace?

Cyber deterrence is complex and challenged by the number of actors and diversity of their capabilities and motivations. Effective cyber deterrence requires both policies and capabilities that are aligned with all the elements of our national power. The Department must continue to develop capabilities to attribute and deter cyberattacks from both state and non-state actors.

Do you believe a robust offensive cyber capability is required to counter the activities of our adversaries and hold their cyber-enabled capabilities at risk?

Yes. One of the tenets of the Department's cyber strategy is the ability to provide the President a variety of cyber options, to include offensive options when directed. The Department, in conjunction with other interagency partners, must provide those capabilities should the need arise.

Relationships

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

The Secretary of Defense.

The Vice Chairman performs duties assigned to him and other duties as assigned by the Chairman, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense. In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as the Chairman and performs the duties of the Chairman until a successor is appointed or until the absence or disability ceases. These duties include providing military advice to the Secretary of Defense. The Vice Chairman may also provide the Secretary of Defense advice upon the Secretary's request in his capacity as a military adviser.

The National Security Advisor.

The Vice Chairman works closely with the Chairman and the National Security Advisor to ensure that military efforts and options are synchronized with other department and agency efforts across the government. When performing the duties of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman serves as an advisor to the National Security Council and works with the National Security Advisor to inform and implement Presidential decisions.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The relationship of the Vice Chairman with the Deputy Secretary is similar to that with the Secretary. The Deputy Secretary of Defense has been delegated full power and authority to act for the Secretary of Defense on any matters upon which the Secretary is authorized to act.

The Under Secretaries of Defense.

The Under Secretaries of Defense are the principal staff assistants and advisers to the Secretary regarding matters related to their functional areas, and they exercise policy and oversight functions within their respective areas. In carrying out their duties, the Under Secretaries issue instructions and directive memoranda to implement the Secretary's approved policies. When carrying out their responsibilities as directed by the President and Secretary of Defense, Under Secretaries typically transmit communications to commanders of the unified and specified commands through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If the Chairman is absent or disabled, they can communicate through the Vice Chairman as necessary.

The General Counsel of the Department of Defense.

The DoD General Counsel serves as the chief legal officer of the Department of Defense, and generally is responsible to oversee legal services, establish policy, and administer the DoD Standards of Conduct Program. The DoD General Counsel also establishes policy on specific legal issues and provides advice on significant international law issues raised in relation to major military operations, the DoD Law of War Program, or the legality of weapons reviews. Communications between the combatant commanders and the DoD General Counsel are normally transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The office of the DoD General Counsel works closely with the Office of Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Department of Defense Inspector General.

The Department of Defense Inspector General performs the duties, has the responsibilities, and exercises the powers specified in the Inspector General Act of 1978.

The Vice Chairman must cooperate with and provide support to the Department of Defense Inspector General as required.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Vice Chairman performs the duties assigned to him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and such other duties as assigned by the Chairman, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense. When there is a vacancy in the office of the Chairman, or during the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman and performs the duties of the Chairman until a successor is appointed or the absence or disability ceases. If confirmed, I look forward to a close working relationship with the Chairman.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments.

The Secretaries are the heads of their respective military Departments and are responsible for, and have the authority necessary to conduct, all affairs of their respective Departments. Subject to the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense, and subject to the authority of the Combatant Commanders, the Secretaries of Military Departments are responsible for administration and support of forces that are assigned to unified and specified commands. When

the Chairman is absent or his office is vacant, the Vice Chairman advises the Secretary of Defense on the extent to which program recommendations and budget proposals of the Military Departments conform to priorities in strategic plans and with the priorities established for requirements of the Combatant Commands. The Secretaries of the Military Departments also are responsible for such other activities as may be prescribed by law or by the President or Secretary of Defense.

The Chiefs of Staff of the Services.

The Vice Chairman has a close, collaborative relationship with the Service Chiefs. As a result of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the Service Chiefs are not in the operational chain of command. However, this change does not diminish their importance with respect to their Title 10 responsibilities. The Chiefs of Staff of the Services serve two primary roles. First, they are responsible for the organization, training, and equipping of their respective Services. They cooperate with and support the Combatant Commanders to assure the preparedness of assigned forces for missions as directed by the Secretary of Defense and the President. Second, as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chiefs are advisers to the President, National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense as the senior uniformed leaders of their respective Services. In this function, they play a critically important role in shaping military advice and developing our joint capabilities. The Vice Chairman works closely with the Service Chiefs to fulfill war-fighting and operational requirements.

The Combatant Commanders.

The commander of a combatant command is responsible to the President and to the Secretary of Defense for the performance of missions assigned to that command by the President or by the Secretary with the approval of the President. Additionally, the Chairman serves as the means of communication between the combatant commanders and the President or Secretary of Defense when directed by the President. When there is a vacancy in the office of Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman when interacting with the combatant commanders. The Vice Chairman should work closely with the combatant commanders to enable their war-fighting capabilities and provide other support and coordination as required.

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

The Chief of the National Guard heads a joint activity of the Department of Defense and is the senior uniformed National Guard officer responsible for formulating, developing and coordinating all policies, programs and plans affecting Army and Air National Guard personnel. Through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is the principal adviser to the Secretary of Defense on National Guard matters. He also serves as the principal adviser to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force on all National Guard and Air National Guard issues. The National Guard Bureau Chief also serves as the department's official channel of communication with both the Governors and Adjutants General. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau has the specific responsibility of addressing matters involving non-

Federalized National Guard forces in support of homeland defense and civil support missions. The Vice Chairman works closely with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to provide support as required.

The Commander, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan.

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman are not in the chain of command of the Commander, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan (USFOR-A). The Commander, USFOR-A reports to the Commander, USCENTCOM, who, in turn, reports directly to the Secretary of Defense. The Commander, USFOR-A does not have a formal command relationship with the Chairman or the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he coordinates with the Chairman through the Commander, USCENTCOM on a regular basis. The Commander, USFOR-A sends his advice and opinions related to Operation Resolute Support to the Commander, USCENTCOM, who, in turn, presents them to the Chairman. When there is a vacancy in the office of Chairman or in the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman acts as Chairman when interacting with the Commander, U.S. Forces - Afghanistan.

Major Challenges

What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you expect to face if you are confirmed?

The most significant challenge I expect to face, if confirmed, is the combination of a highly complex and volatile security environment, a Joint Force coming off a fourteen year war footing, and continued fiscal uncertainty. We must simultaneously contend with both near-peer (and rising near-peer) states as well as with increasingly capable and global non-state actors who seek to threaten the U.S. homeland, our interests, and our allies. Meanwhile we are working to rebuild the capacity, capability, and readiness of our Joint Force. Furthermore we must do this with one hand tied behind our back without the predictability of an annual base budget and without the authority to implement necessary and cost-saving reforms within the Department.

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

If confirmed, I will work with the Department and interagency leadership and with the Congress to identify, communicate, and manage the operational and fiscal risks while continuing to advocate for the authorities and resources needed to develop and field a Joint Force capable of meeting the demands of the Nation today as well as prepare for future threats.

Priorities

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

My priorities will be focused on developing necessary capabilities, concepts, and forces to defend the Nation in the 21st Century. This includes modernizing our aging nuclear enterprise, protecting our assured access to space, protecting DoD cyber networks and developing offensive cyber options for the President. It also includes supporting the Defense Innovation Initiative and supporting Secretary Carter's Force of the Future Initiative to develop and care for the best All Volunteer Force the world has ever seen.

Chain of Command

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

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

Yes. The law is clear that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the commanders of the combatant commands. Military doctrine reflects these command relationships. If confirmed, I will enable the decision-making process and transmit orders as directed.

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

U.S. military forces should normally operate under the chain of command established in Title 10. There may be times, such as in the case of certain sensitive military operations, where it may be appropriate for the President to direct other temporary command relationships. However, in all cases U.S. armed forces supporting such operations remain bound by the law of armed conflict, are accountable to the Title 10 chain of command, and are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice for disciplinary matters.

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

Under Title 50, the Secretary of Defense is charged with ensuring that the military departments maintain sufficient capabilities to collect and produce intelligence to meet requirements of the DNI, Secretary of Defense, CJCS, and COCOMs. Title 50 further authorizes the Secretary to use such elements of the DoD as may be appropriate for the execution of the national intelligence program functions described in Section 3038 of Title 50. As a general rule, our military forces

are most effective when they operate under a military chain of command. However, there are circumstances in which exceptions to this general rule would permit our forces to be employed more effectively. There are existing authorities and agreements to facilitate the review and approval of such exceptions. I have no recommendations for changes to this framework at this time.

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

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

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

I presently do not see a need to change section 151 or 163.

Officer Management Issues

As the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff you would have significant responsibilities with regard to joint officer management policies.

If confirmed, what modifications would you make to provide the Department of Defense and the military services the force management tools necessary to meet the needs of the 21st century joint, all-volunteer force?

The Department, the Joint Staff, and the Services have worked over the past 10 years to develop force management tools to meet the challenges of the 21st century joint force. If confirmed, I will take every opportunity to examine the strategic environment to ensure that the tools remain relevant.

Do you believe the current DOD and service procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending nomination by the President are sufficient to ensure the Secretaries of the military departments, the Secretary of Defense, and the President can make informed decisions?

The current procedures and practices provide the Department and the Services the policies and procedures to identify officers for future leadership positions. The Services' evaluations of the qualifications, previous performance, and potential of their officers provides the information to make informed decisions regarding the promotion and utilization of the Services' officers.

In your view, are these procedures and practices fair and reasonable for the officers involved?

I believe the procedures and practices are fair and reasonable for the officers involved.

What modifications, if any, to the requirements for joint officer qualifications are necessary to ensure that military officers are able to attain meaningful joint and service-specific leadership experience and professional development?

I believe the requirement for officers to be educated, trained and oriented in joint matters through challenging joint experiences appropriately prepares officers for the challenges at both the strategic and operational level. I currently do not recommend any modifications to the joint officer qualification requirement.

In your view, what is the impact of joint qualification requirements on the ability of the services to select the best qualified officers for promotion and to enable officer assignments that will satisfy service-specific officer professional development requirements?

Although there is limited time to meet the developmental requirements, the Services have proven they are able to develop their officers' and provide a cadre of well-rounded and competitive officers capable of integrating service functions at both the strategic and operational level. I believe the end result provides the Department with officers who possess the greatest opportunity in senior leadership positions.

In 2008, Congress created the requirement that the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff be selected by a board of officers convened by the Secretary of Defense. This process remains the only joint duty officer position specifically selected by a selection board from among qualified officers of the armed forces.

Do you consider the selection process required by section 156 of title 10, United States Code, to be an efficient and effective process for selecting officers from among the services to serve in this joint position?

Yes. The selection process for this unique statutory position is efficient and effective.

What lessons, if any, have been captured from this joint officer selection board process that could improve the processes for selection of officers in the military services?

My understanding is the lessons gleaned from the joint board process are specific to the joint environment and therefore would not apply to Services' officer selection.

Would you support expanding the process used to select the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to other joint billets? Why or why not?

We have a codified process which allows the Department to select qualified officers into established joint positions. Expanding our selection process, at this time, is unnecessary. Established processes used to select general/flag officers to joint positions are sound. The process for identifying officers gives the Combatant Commander and the Chairman flexibility. We can select from across the Services (to include the Coast Guard); Active, Guard, and Reserve Component, to ensure we get the right individual with the right skills and experience. The process also gives the commander and leadership an opportunity to quickly review a slate of nominated officers, and conduct interviews as necessary. Finally, the process is extremely responsive to emerging or unexpected requirements. We can quickly alert the Services to identify eligible personnel, select, nominate and have them in position in as little as 90 days if necessary.

Headquarters Streamlining

The Senate reported Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act directs reforms to consolidate the headquarters functions of the Department of Defense and the military departments.

If confirmed, and if the provisions in the bill become law, what would be your role in identifying and implementing streamlining and reductions in the Joint Staff?

If confirmed, I will engage with the Chairman and Joint Staff to consider organizational streamlining by reducing, realigning, or eliminating redundant or conflicting requirements.

What Joint Staff areas, specifically and if any, do you consider to be the priorities for possible consolidation or reductions?

An example of consolidation efforts that I would consider, if confirmed, is the potential consolidation of IT services and maintenance activities within the Pentagon to reduce costs and unnecessary redundancies. The Joint Staff J6 is currently working with US Army Information Technology Agency (ITA), Washington Headquarters Services (WHS) and Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) to identify potential consolidation options. Additional potential areas for consolidation or reduction that I would consider, if confirmed, include the consolidation of support functions within Joint Staff directorates and the elimination of duplicative functions accomplished by the OSD, Joint Staff and Defense Activities.

To the extent that the Joint Staff has functions that overlap with the Department of Defense and the military departments, what would be your approach to consolidating and reducing redundancy?

First we will have to determine if duplicative or redundant functions are directed by statute. Some duplicative responsibilities are laid out in law with some portions executed by the Department, some by the Joint Staff and some by the military departments. Legislative changes may be required to consolidate and reduce redundancies. A combined review by the OSD, Services and the Joint Staff may be the best course of action to identify duplicative functions to reduce, realign, or eliminate.

Training and Assignment of General and Flag Officers

In your view, do a sufficient number of general and flag officers have advanced training and degrees in scientific and technical disciplines?

Yes. The Joint Staff continues to work closely with the Service Chiefs and other leaders to ensure an appropriate pipeline of specialized, technical officer talent is available with the right-skilled and experienced leadership. We also have a rigorous and deliberate Service accession, training and development processes generate the technical and scientific capability needed in sufficient numbers to meet DoD mission needs.

Are the career paths for officers with technical skills appropriate to ensure that the Department and the services can execute complex acquisition programs, adapt to a rapidly changing technological threat environment, and make informed investment decisions? If not, what will you do to address this deficiency?

While the Services vary with respect to the use of military in acquisition, each Service tailors officer career paths to meet Service mission priorities, which includes successfully executing critical major acquisition programs. I believe the Department has, and continues to grow, world-class, technically astute officers ready to take on the challenges of a rapidly changing technical and acquisition environment. Each Service has career path models that are appropriate and aligned with their force management process.

In your view do current general and flag officer assignment policies provide and incentivize qualified officers to serve in acquisition programs? Do tour lengths for those assignments enable and empower such officers to effectively manage acquisition programs? If not, what changes do you believe are necessary to improve the effectiveness of senior officers assigned those duties?

Yes. If confirmed, I will work to strengthen communication processes between Vice Service Chiefs, Service Acquisition Executives and OSD leadership to make sure we continuously improve our policy, development and assignment of top motivated, qualified military personnel in Defense Acquisition. Senior officers are assigned with adequate tenure to effectively manage their programs and the Services demonstrate flexibility in adjusting tour lengths to logical progression points in acquisition programs.

Are you satisfied that the Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the military services have in place sufficient training and resources to provide general and flag officers, and Senior Executive Service employees the training they need to make informed, ethical decisions? If not, what actions would you take, if confirmed, to address your concerns?

Yes. The ability to make ethical decisions based on the shared values of the profession of arms is identified as a specific Desired Leader Attribute for leaders throughout the military and is

common to all Joint and Service developmental efforts. The ethical foundation is laid at the outset of an officer's career and is further developed and reinforced in formal education and training settings throughout their progression through the ranks. If confirmed, I will ensure these high standards are upheld.

It has been observed that despite numerous changes in the law, the requirements and the process for attaining joint officer qualifications is still beset by systemic challenges. Some of these challenges appear to force the services to make officer assignments to "check the box" for joint qualifications at the cost of depriving the services of flexibility to assign officers to other career enhancing and professional development opportunities. Officers not assigned to a designated joint billet on an operational staff receive joint credit while other officers supporting the same joint commander do not receive joint credit unless they submit a package to have their assignments qualify for joint service. As operational tempo remains high and as end strength continues to decline to historically low levels, some exceptionally qualified officers will be unable to serve in qualifying assignments to earn joint credit because the Nation demands they perform other critical duties. As a result those officers may be disadvantaged professionally as compared to their peers for promotion eligibility. Given the substantial resources invested in the developing officers to serve successfully in, and to support or lead joint forces, more must be done to improve the joint qualification system or to replace it with a system that is more effective.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to review the joint qualification requirements to ensure that the qualification process is matched to the increasingly joint service environment in which many officers serve throughout their careers?

Developing officers to successfully serve in or lead joint forces is very important and worth the resources invested. Services must actively manage the officers' careers to ensure the most talented officers obtain the joint qualification. Officers who do not develop these skills, no matter how exceptional their performance at the tactical level, are not adequately prepared to accept challenging joint assignments when compared to their peers. The joint officer qualification process provides a tested and flexible means to ensure officers develop the skills necessary for successful service at the operational and strategic levels. The current process also already includes the means for officers in non-joint operational assignments to receive credit toward joint qualification if their duties lead to the acquisition of significant experience in joint matters. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the joint officer qualification requirements, process, and resource investments continue to deliver the Joint Force necessary to meet the demands of the Nation.

Should the formal requirement for joint qualifications be eliminated as a consideration for promotions and assignments?

No. I believe we need to continue to ensure our future senior leaders are well-prepared to operate in challenging joint environments. The promotion requirement incentivizes both the Service and the officer to obtain joint experience.

Security Strategies and Guidance

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

The range and diversity of threats are increasing. Both potential state and non-state adversaries are projected to possess increased military capabilities, and will continue to benefit from the rapid diffusion of technology. Likewise, future adversaries are also developing new ways to counter our traditional military advantages.

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

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

If sequestration proceeds we receive less funding, then we will be forced to make further decisions with regard to capabilities, capacity and readiness – which will result in increased risk for our combatant commanders. Sequestration will have a direct impact on the readiness of the Joint Force to execute operations and support the goals outlined in the Defense Strategic Guidance.

In your view, as Russian aggression and the emergence of ISIL have occurred since the Defense Strategic Guidance was issued in January 2012, is that strategic guidance still appropriate for the threats we face today or do you think an update is warranted?

The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review provide broad guidance to meet the full range of potential threats, from high-end state adversaries to non-state organizations. As threats evolve, it is appropriate to review the assumptions made in formulating a strategy. If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff and the Department to determine the necessity for an update to the strategic guidance.

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

With planned, stable funding, I am confident we will be able to balance capability, capacity, and readiness. If BCA returns, the Services will have to make additional cuts to their forces, impacting capabilities, capacity and readiness, leading to increased risk to meeting current and future security challenges.

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

If confirmed as Vice Chairman, I would focus on finding the balance between capacity, capabilities, and readiness for the Joint Force in order to best prepare for current and future threats. Our cyber, space, and nuclear capabilities will be an area of particular emphasis.

Strategic Risk

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

Army and Marine Corps forces are an important part of our ability to respond to multiple, simultaneous, or near-simultaneous, crises and to deter conflicts. Our soldiers and Marines also play a key role in reassuring our allies and shaping conditions overseas through security cooperation activities. End strength levels must be considered in light of these missions, the strategic environment, readiness levels, and operational tempo.

What is your understanding and assessment of the Army and Marine Corps' decision to reduce active end strength to 450,000 and 182,000 soldiers respectively by the end of 2017?

I believe that any change in end strength needs to be understood in terms of risk. Reducing our Army and Marine Corps end strength increases risk and may impact our ability to shape world conditions, assure allies, and deter conflicts. However, I believe our current strategy is still achievable at these end strengths, though at increased risk. Any further cuts though, would dramatically increase our strategic risk.

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

I believe we would have to prioritize what we are asking our forces to do on a daily basis. For some missions, we should look to our allies and partners to help mitigate risk. In other missions, we would need to look for different ways to operate. Ultimately, consistent with our funding levels, we need to align resources to counter our most dangerous threats.

Upon issuance of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, the FY 2015 budget reduced projected defense budgets by \$113 billion over five years. What was the incurred strategic risk of this reduction relative to the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance?

A reduction on defense resources in an increasingly complex strategic environment will introduce strategic risk to our defense strategy (both the QDR and DSG). I am happy to discuss further details in a classified venue.

Chairman's Risk Assessment

In his 2013 risk assessment, Chairman Dempsey identified for the first time six National Security Interests that were derived from four enduring interests contained in the 2010 National Security Strategy. The April 2013 assessment identified several areas of broad and significant risk to national security as a result of current budget issues.

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

Overall, strategic and military risk trends are increasing. I would be happy to discuss risk in a classified venue.

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

In an unclassified forum I am reluctant to go into much detail. Generally, our Combatant Commanders face increasing risk, especially if BCA goes back into effect. We ask a lot of our Commanders, and we must be prepared to resource them appropriately. I will say that all military operations entail risk, but we are committed to providing the President a range of options given any threat to U.S. interests.

Transformation

Military “transformation” has been a broad objective of the Armed Forces since the end of the Cold War. In your view, what does military “transformation” mean?

Military transformation means building a Joint Force that is intellectually and organizationally capable of seizing and capitalizing on emerging technological or organizational opportunities, not just adapting or reacting to conditions that the world presents. Military transformation is realized over time through constant innovation in our organizational structures, doctrine, education, leader development and material capabilities.

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

My understanding is that we are making progress, but there is more work to be done. We are continuing the implementation of the Joint Operational Access Concept, a concept that provides a framework to ensure the Joint Force can continue to conduct operations to gain access based on the requirements of the broader mission despite growth of anti-access and area-denial threats. We're also making progress in the Joint Information Environment, implementing innovation change across the Department that enhance mission effectiveness and cyber security. Ultimately, our goal is a versatile, responsive, decisive, and affordable Joint Force.

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

If confirmed, I believe we should be selective in the capabilities we choose to reconstitute as we draw down in Afghanistan, while ensuring that lessons learned over a decade of war are retained. As we get smaller, we must become increasingly versatile, agile and opportunity-seeking. I intend to use my role in the JROC and innovation initiatives to advance this transformation.

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

I believe the Joint Staff has an increasingly important role to play in developing a common understanding of future challenges and how the Joint Force must evolve for success in the future operating environment. To this end, the Joint Staff has a number of useful and unique mechanisms at its disposal. These include military strategy development, joint concepts, war gaming, future joint force requirements, and joint training. I see the Joint Staff increasingly as an aligning mechanism across all the different Joint Force development processes in the department.

Military Capabilities in Support of Defense Strategy

In your opinion, do current military plans include the necessary capabilities to meet the defense strategy stated in the 2014 QDR? Where are areas of higher risk?

In an unclassified forum I am reluctant to go into much detail. The Joint Staff and the Services constantly review our capability portfolios in order to ensure we can achieve our objectives against potential adversaries. The committee receives a quarterly classified report that details gaps in our current military plans.

Does the 2014 QDR specify the correct set of capabilities to decisively win in future high-end engagements?

I believe future engagements may be characterized by increasingly sophisticated adversaries employing advanced weapons and challenging the access and advantages in space and cyberspace that U.S. forces currently enjoy. The 2014 QDR calls for continued investment in new systems and development of operational concepts to address these evolving threats. The recently released National Military Strategy reinforces the QDR's guidance; prioritizing investments to counter anti-access area denial threats, as well as space, cyber, and hybrid threats.

According to the force sizing construct in the 2014 QDR, American forces should be able to “defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multi-phased campaign, and deny the objectives of – or impose unacceptable costs on – another aggressor in another region.”

In your opinion, does the Department's force sizing construct provide adequate capability to address the country's current threat environment?

Yes, the force sizing construct, with its emphasis on a range of military options, provides adequate capability to address the country's current threat environment. This particular excerpt applies to situations where deterrence has failed. The first portion of the force sizing construct states that the U.S. military will be “capable of simultaneously defending the homeland; conducting sustained, distributed counterterrorist operations; and in multiple regions, deterring aggression and assuring allies through forward presence and engagement.” The construct involves more than just capability, it also provides a framework to evaluate capacity and

readiness. To this end, we need support from Congress to ensure that we have sufficient resources to conduct a wide spectrum of missions globally, while maintaining a thoughtful balance of capability, capacity and readiness to respond to a crisis and win decisively.

According to the force sizing construct in the 2014 QDR, American forces should be able to “defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multi-phased campaign, and deny the objectives of – or impose unacceptable costs on – another aggressor in another region.” Are the services adequately sized to meet this construct?

I believe the Services are able to provide forces to meet the construct. Resource constraints have eroded the readiness of the joint force, however, and extended the timelines to make forces available to respond to combatant commander needs. Lack of reliable funding levels hinders our ability to field trained, ready forces to meet combatant commander demand.

What will you advise if the Department cannot meet the demands placed on it?

I would advise that we carefully prioritize the most important missions necessary for meeting our military and defense objectives and for protecting our national security interests. I would also advise that we consistently work with Congress to ensure the Department has sufficient resources to meet the demands the Nation places upon it.

Future Army

The Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) of January 2012 articulated the need to shift strategic emphasis toward the Asia-Pacific region while continuing to engage in the Middle East. Do you agree that future high-end military operations, as envisioned by the DSG, will primarily be naval and air engagements such that the Army will have difficulty justifying the size, structure, and cost of the number and equipment its combat formations?

Looking only at current threats in a particular region as a way to justify force structure is unwise. We must have a robust and capable military ready to respond to multiple threats. The Army has, and will always have, an essential role in the Asia-Pacific region as well as in the rest of the world. If confirmed as Vice Chairman, I would support the Chairman in seeking a fully-trained joint force ready to defend our national security wherever it is threatened.

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

Our nation needs an Army that conducts full spectrum operations as part of the joint force. It must be appropriately sized, structured, and equipped to in order to defend the nation and defeat our adversaries. The Quadrennial Defense Review deemphasized long duration stability operations and reinforced the importance of defeating and denying the objectives of an adversary. The Army continues realigning and resizing consistent with this guidance.

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

The Department has assessed our ability of all Services to execute the defense strategy with their programmed force structure, including the Army. We can execute our strategy at current funding levels with acceptable risk. With the Army, and all of the Services, we must continually assess threats and make adjustments to ensure we have a healthy force, with the right mix between the active and reserve components.

Defense Reduction

In your view, what have been/will be the impacts of the following budget reductions on the military, their capability, capacity, and readiness?

Initial Budget Control Act reduction of \$487 billion

The initial Budget Control Act resulted in an immediate and substantial reduction to the Department's topline and forced our military to make difficult resource decisions, such that we now have a strategy with little to no margin for surprise. The BCA reduction translates to increased risk to our strategy, across the board.

Sequestration in FY 2013

Due to the nature of sequestration, the FY 2013 cuts reduced already-strained readiness. To date, sequestration has resulted in cuts to training, exercises, deployments and maintenance, all of which have a negative impact on force morale. Further, the sequester reductions disrupted modernization efforts and resulted in civilian furloughs and a hiring freeze.

Reduction of \$115 billion in projected spending in the FY 2015 budget, in line with the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review

The FY15 budget request assumes higher risks in some areas, but this budget helps us to remain a modern and capable military even while transitioning to a smaller force and resetting readiness over time. The \$115 billion reduction refers to the difference between the PB15 (FYDP) submission and the BCA sequestration levels across FY15-19. Funding to the sequester levels would result in reduced force structure, decreased readiness funding, exacerbating the existing readiness shortfalls, and reductions to modernization efforts. It would erode our ability to respond to emergent challenges (i.e., increasingly contested space and cyber domains, a resurgent Russia, the Ebola response, and the rise of ISIL), and our ability to execute the defense strategy.

Sequestered Budget Control Act discretionary caps starting in FY 2016 onward

If sequester level cuts return in FY16, then we will see increased risks and fewer military options to defend our Nation and its interests. The impact of sequestration and other budget constraints

will further reduce unit readiness and disrupt modernization. The effects caused by deferred maintenance, and lost training will impose significant strain on long-term institutional readiness. Ultimately, reduced readiness (i.e., reduced training cycles, deferred maintenance, and the continuing pace of current operations) will damage the effectiveness, credibility and the morale of our military. Continued sequester cuts will create a situation where our defense strategy may no longer be viable.

The fiscal year 2016 budget request assumes that the Budget Control Act will be amended in fiscal year 2016. The fiscal year 2016 budget resolution passed by the Senate and House of Representatives do not assume this but instead provides \$38 billion of the necessary spending through OCO budget. Should this funding not be available, what recommendations would you have, if confirmed, for how the Department of Defense should manage the \$35 billion in cuts for fiscal year 2016?

We remain hopeful that Congress can halt the abrupt, deep, and blunt cuts of sequestration and we will continue to reduce costs through increased efficiency and reforms, some requiring Congressional support. But an FY16 budget at BCA cap levels will create risks requiring us to revisit the defense strategy. With a \$35 billion cut in FY16, we will be forced to further reduce the size of the force, delay readiness restoration, and reduce modernization and investment programs.

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

The loss of \$35 billion from the FY16 defense budget would gravely undercut the Department's readiness and future force generation capability. We would be forced to mortgage readiness recovery, equipment recapitalization, and force modernization in order to support currently deployed and next-to-deploy forces. Placing all of this in the context of expanding global threats, we would be unable execute the defense strategy. Sufficient and predictable resourcing is critical in our ability to maintain both military readiness and to meet additional operational demands.

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

Because of the nature of the sequester mechanism, funding for operations and maintenance, procurement, RDT&E, and military construction suffer disproportionately. The result of these cuts would be a military that is smaller and less capable. While our military would continue to provide presence and respond to crises, the FY16 BCA cuts would increase risk, prolong readiness recovery, and delay necessary modernization for hundreds of programs, large and small. Cuts in funding for research and development would erode the technological superiority enjoyed by U.S. forces and increase risk in future conflicts.

Readiness Funding

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

The current readiness of the Joint Force poses significant risk to our ability to execute the National Military Strategy. Sequestration exacerbated the existing state of poor readiness as a result of over a decade of exceptional demand in defense of the Nation. The Bipartisan Budget Act restored some resources, and provided much needed fiscal certainty and stability, thereby inhibiting any further readiness decline. Fully restoring readiness of the Armed Forces to meet national security requirements across the full spectrum of military operations requires readiness recovery time coupled with sufficient and predictable resourcing.

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

Near-term trends will remain significantly-less-than-optimal for the foreseeable future unless and until Congress provides sufficient and predictable funding and the authorities for the Department to implement critical cost-saving reforms. The loss of additional resourcing and/or the advent of increased operational demands would introduce a significant amount of additional risk to ongoing military operations.

How critical is it to find a solution to sequestration given the impacts we have already seen to DOD readiness in fiscal year 2014?

It is critical to find a permanent solution to sequestration and to provide the Department with sufficient and predictable resourcing in order to restore the Joint Forces' ability to provide the full range of sufficient military capabilities. The present approach of augmenting base budget with OCO funds is unsustainable and will prevent the Department from fully recovering, meeting additional commitments, and restoring our comparative advantage through modernization. Without a sufficient and predictable funding profile, current operations can only continue at the expense of long term development and sustainment efforts, further complicating existing readiness challenges.

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

Service methods for funding equipment maintenance continually assesses the requirements of post-conflict reset—a combination of balancing reset, unit readiness and the sustainment of core capabilities--and developing detailed maintenance plans that balance operational availability with maintenance requirements. However, starts and stops in the budget process and funding uncertainties have a negative effect on the workload scheduling at Service depots. These negative effects ripple beyond the current year and can extend for months and even years.

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

Without consistent and predictable base budget funding at requested levels, the Services will continue to rely on OCO to maintain equipment readiness. Inadequate funding of enduring and contingency sustainment requirements results in increased maintenance backlog. Equipment maintenance funding is driven by unit readiness requirements and based on a variety of factors to

include force structure, operations tempo, schedule, nature and usage rate of the equipment, and safety. The Services used OCO funding for reset of equipment in support of OIF and OEF combat operations. In the past, this resulted in funding of baseline sustainment accounts at levels below Service enduring requirements.

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

It requires continuous attention to ensure the accumulation of backlog does not grow beyond what is manageable. Excessive backlog can eventually lead to reduced equipment availability rates, less reliable systems, and potentially shortened service life. OCO funding, beyond the end of combat operations, and adequate funding of Service baseline budget levels are important if we are to improve the trend in equipment readiness.

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

It remains critically important to maintain funding levels well beyond cessation of current operations to fully restore equipment readiness and support the National Security Strategy. In the near to mid-term, OCO dollars for enduring requirements and equipment reset is necessary for Joint Force readiness. OCO is still required to adequately address maintenance, repair and overhaul requirements.

In years past, Congress has based additional readiness funding decisions on the Service Chief unfunded priorities lists. However, in recent years those lists have either not been provided or have arrived too late in our markup process. Do you agree to provide unfunded priorities lists to Congress in a timely manner beginning with the fiscal year 2017 budget request?

Should the Services have such priorities, the process allows the Joint Chiefs to make recommendations that are responsive to Congress after first informing the Secretary of Defense. Should I be confirmed, I will support the use of this process when warranted.

Defense Acquisition Reform

Congress is considering a number of acquisition reform measures designed to reduce the costs and development timelines of major systems, and to streamline access to innovative commercial technologies and systems. What are your views regarding acquisition reform and the need for improvements in the Defense acquisition process?

I believe that acquisition reform in the Department should be based upon the following key principals:

- a. The responsibility and authority for acquisition system outcomes should be clearly identified within the DoD;
- b. The requirements' sponsor should be an integral part of delivering needed capability and remains accountable throughout the acquisition process, and;

c. The effort to reduce overhead and increase efficiencies across defense acquisition should be continued.

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

The Department's acquisition processes are constantly evolving in order to reduce overhead, increase efficiencies, and remain agile and responsive to the needs of our warfighters. The Department regularly reviews and updates the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) and has recently incorporated many "Better Buying Power" initiatives. If confirmed, I would strongly support the Department's acquisition reform vision.

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

It's my understanding that recent cost and schedule trends show improvement, but I am still concerned that acquisition, procurement, and operations and support costs will continue their historic growth profiles. This growth will further exacerbate shortfalls under a sequestered budget and threaten our ability to meet our partner and ally security guarantees.

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

If confirmed, I will use the JROC to scrub weapon system requirements and consider cost-informed performance tradeoffs early and often to drive out requirements-related weapon-system cost growth. I will also advocate for versatile future capabilities that are both affordable and sustainable as a hedge against legacy weapon systems' cost growth.

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

As the lead of the Department's senior validation body, I would ensure the JROC continues to make adjustments and improvements to the JCIDS process as appropriate. A major review and update was just completed in Feb 2015. The update continues to focus appropriate rigor in validating realistic, technically achievable, prioritized, and cost-informed requirement.

If confirmed, what actions would you propose, if any, to ensure that resources are programmed for acquisition programs that are consistent with their cost estimates and schedules?

If confirmed, I will advocate in the Department's resource allocation process for major system resource funding that is consistent with the Secretary's cost and schedule position.

What should the role of the Combatant Commanders, Service Chiefs, Service Acquisition Executives, and Undersecretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics be in the acquisition process?

Service Chiefs and Combatant Commanders play a vital role in requirements generation and are pivotal to acquisition process success. Their engagement with the Service and Defense Acquisition Executives during the acquisition life-cycle of a weapon system also prevents requirements growth. USD(AT&L)'s role in reviewing Service plans at discrete milestones associated with major Department resource commitments ensures programs are affordable and executable, and that they follow sound business and risk management practices.

Are there specific new roles or responsibilities that should be assigned to the Service Chiefs or Service Secretaries in the acquisition process?

If confirmed, I will examine the idea of new roles and responsibilities. I believe that any change should not undermine the statutory responsibilities of the Secretary of Defense. However, I am supportive of changes that promote Service accountability in the acquisition process and further streamline the bureaucratic processes.

Tactical Fighter Programs

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program, which is the largest and most expensive acquisition program in the Department's history, was formally initiated as a program of record in 2002, with a total planned buy of 2,443 aircraft for the U.S. The program has not yet completed the System Development and Demonstration (SDD) phase, and is not due to enter full rate production until 2019, 17 years after its inception. At projected procurement rates, the aircraft will be procured by the Department well into the 2030 decade to reach its total quantity buy. The requirement for 2,443 aircraft was established nearly 20 years ago; do you believe that requirement is still valid in light of countervailing pressure to reduce force structure to conserve resources and to improve capability to respond to prospective adversary technological advances and increased capabilities with regard to establishing contested combat environments, combined with updated threat assessments and an evolving national defense strategy?

The F-35 remains an integral part of the Department's future capabilities portfolio as we prepare for contingencies. In many of the scenarios we may face, the advanced capabilities of the Joint Strike Fighter are essential. If confirmed, I will support ongoing analysis looking at whether 2,443 is the right number of aircraft, but I do not anticipate reductions to the required capacity at this time.

Do you believe the nation can afford to procure these aircraft at a cost of \$12B to \$15B per year for nearly the next 20 years for an aircraft design that will be 30 years old at the completion of the program procurement phase?

I believe the Department cannot allow shortfalls in fighter capability or capacity to develop. Fifth-generation fighter aircraft, including the F-35, are critical as we contend with the

technological advancements of near-peer competitors. We have been working diligently to make the overall cost per F-35 more affordable. Additionally, there will continue to be critical updates throughout the life cycle of the F-35 that will ensure the platform maintains a tactical advantage.

Do you believe the Department's current and planned force mix of short-range fighters and long-range strike aircraft, whether land- or maritime-based, is sufficient to meet current and future threats around the globe, and most especially in the Asia-Pacific theater of operations where the "tyranny of distance" is such a major factor?

If confirmed, I will support continual assessments to assure our ability to meet current and future threats, including those concerning short-range fighters and long-range strike aircraft. To ensure we are postured to address the "tyranny of distance" and succeed militarily, the DoD, over the past three years, has made significant progress in developing new alliance initiatives, securing new rotational access for U.S. forces, and enhancing both the quantity and quality of U.S. forces and capabilities in the Pacific region.

The Senate Armed Services Committee report accompanying S. 1376, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, would require the Secretary of Defense to assess the current requirement for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter total program of record quantity, and then to revalidate that quantity or identify a new requirement for the total number of F-35 aircraft the Department would ultimately procure. What will be your role in assisting the Secretary to revalidate the F-35 total program quantity?

If confirmed, I will assist the Chairman, in consultation with the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC), in advising the Secretary in the review of the level of capability and capacity required to fulfill the established joint military requirements. This advice will ensure the appropriate balance is struck consistent with the level of priorities identified by the defense strategy and combatant commander requirements.

The Air Force has proposed several times over the last decades to retire the A-10 close air support aircraft fleet, but each time Congress has rejected the proposals due to lack of a sufficient replacement capability. The Air Force's latest proposals to retire the fleet in fiscal years 2015 and 2016 were again rejected by Congress. Do you believe a need exists for a dedicated capability to provide close air support for American troops in close quarters battles?

No. The interoperable underpinning of joint requirements enables effective close air support utilizing a range of multi-role aircraft. Lessons from the last fourteen years of combat have institutionalized tactics, techniques and procedures integrating a number of manned and unmanned systems supporting these missions. Translating these lessons into joint requirements continues to advance our ability to provide close air support with advanced sensors and precise lethality of our weapon systems.

What will be your role in ensuring our land forces receive the air support they'll need to survive and succeed while fighting the nation's land battles?

If confirmed, in consultation with the advisors to the JROC, I will ensure the appropriate capabilities are identified, assessed, and approved to meet the requirements of our land forces. I will also recommend alternative program recommendations and budget proposals, where necessary, to achieve this end.

The Secretary of the Navy recently remarked that he believed the F-35 would be the nation's last manned fighter aircraft. Do you believe this to be true?

Despite the rapid advance of robotic and autonomous technologies over the past decade, I believe that the intellect and judgment of the human pilot remain integral to the combat capability provided by fighter aircraft. Decisions about future platforms will be informed by human and systems capabilities as well as mission requirements.

If so, what will be your role in leading capabilities and requirements development to increase the role of unmanned aerial combat systems in the Department?

If confirmed, in my role as Chairman of the JROC, I will identify, assess and approve opportunities for increased employment of unmanned systems across the Joint Force. This includes leveraging validated capabilities identified in the Joint Concept for Robotics and Autonomous Systems now in development. I will also work with industry, science and technology, and academia to identify emerging technologies and align them with Joint Force requirements.

If not, how do you see the future balance developing between manned and unmanned combat aircraft for the Department's future force structure?

I believe that the continued growth in robotic and autonomous systems technology will significantly impact the ongoing development and fielding of all future weapons systems, not just combat aircraft. The Joint Concept for Robotic and Autonomous Systems currently under development will help incorporate these new technologies to maximize the effectiveness of the Joint Force.

Space

China's test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007 was a turning point for the United States in its policies and procedure to ensure access to space. As a nation heavily dependent on space assets for both military and economic advantage, the United States has to make protection of space assets become a national priority.

Do you agree that space situational awareness and protection of space assets now has the appropriate level of national security priority?

Yes. Space situational awareness underpins our ability to operate safely in an increasingly

congested space environment. It is vital that the U.S. protect national space assets to maintain the benefits and advantages dependent on our access to space.

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

China is rapidly developing space capabilities of its own that mirror U.S. capabilities and could threaten our access and use of space for national security purposes. If confirmed, I will review the U.S. Military's efforts to address China's developments in space, and will coordinate closely with the Secretary of Defense.

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

The National Security Space Strategy clearly highlights the growing challenges in the space domain. If confirmed, I will insist on policies, programs, and other measures that ensure U.S. warfighters can continue to depend on having the advantages that space confers.

Access to Radio Frequency Spectrum

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

If confirmed, I will work with Interagency and industry partners on spectrum sharing in order to maintain DoD's assured access to the spectrum necessary to train and conduct operations while also enabling access for commercial broadband. I will also continue to support Public Law 106-65 (National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000), which requires the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to certify that any alternative band or bands to be substituted for spectrum currently used by DoD provide "comparable technical characteristics to restore essential military capability that will be lost as a result of the band of frequencies to be so surrendered." This provision is necessary to ensure that DoD maintains access to spectrum necessary to operate critical military capabilities.

Strategic Systems

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

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

Yes, I am concerned that in the current budget environment completing these modernization programs will be a challenge. If confirmed, I will give full attention to these programs as they develop and mature. Modernizing the strategic delivery systems and sustaining the strategic nuclear enterprise are vital to maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent, which is

essential to deterring potential adversaries and assuring our allies. As with any funding choices, we will make decisions that balance fiscal prudence with appropriate risk to provide the best possible capabilities.

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

Yes.

Section 1052 of the Fiscal year 2014 NDAA established a “Council on Oversight of the National Leadership Command, Control and Communications System”.

What do you see as the most pressing challenges in nuclear command, control and communications from a policy and acquisition perspective?

Nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) is an enduring priority where we face the challenge of sustaining existing capabilities until new, modernized capabilities can be fielded. We must provide an assured, survivable and enduring NC3 system that simultaneously takes advantage of modern communication capabilities while remaining secure and hardened against attacks ranging from cyber to the most extreme kinetic attacks.

What do you see as the most pressing challenges in overall national leadership communications from a policy and acquisition perspective?

Providing our national leadership with secure, reliable voice, video and data communications is a critical capability. This capability must be assured, survivable and enduring; allowing senior defense advisors to communicate with the President, the Combatant Commands and strategic Allies during normal day-to-day operations and during national crises from a fixed, mobile or airborne location. The major challenge from both a policy and acquisition perspective is to sustain existing capabilities until new, modernized capabilities can be fielded.

If confirmed will you actively support Section 1052 and work with outgoing Vice Chairman Winnefeld to understand the importance of this Council in ensuring the President has at all times control of nuclear weapons?

Yes.

If confirmed will you agree to attend meetings as a member listed in its statute?

Yes.

In 2014 Secretary Hagel has conducted an assessment of the state of nuclear deterrence operations of the Department of Defense.

Do you agree with its findings?

Yes, I agree with the conclusion of both the internal and external reviews that while our nuclear forces are currently meeting the demands of the mission with dedication, significant changes are required to ensure the safety, security, and effectiveness of the force in the future.

Will you actively support the findings and their implementation

Yes, if confirmed, I will devote significant attention to the state of our nuclear deterrence enterprise and will ensure the appropriate corrective actions are implemented.

Missile Defense in the Boost Phase

The Missile Defense Agency's (MDA) mission is to develop, test, and field an integrated, layered ballistic missile defense system to defend the United States and its allies against all ranges of enemy ballistic missiles in all phases of flight. While MDA is conducting research into next generation laser concepts that could be mounted on high altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, there is no program of record designed to intercept missiles during the boost phase of flight, when they are potentially most vulnerable. Do you agree with the Commander of Northern Command, when he said on April 7, 2015, referring to missile threats that "we need to be able to start knocking them down in the boost phase...and not rely on the midcourse phase where we are today?"

Yes. Ballistic missiles are easier to detect and track in their boost phase, and typically countermeasures such as decoys are not deployed until after booster burnout. These factors make boost-phase intercept an attractive option to investigate.

Would you support an increase in the priority of technology investments to develop and deploy a boost phase airborne laser weapon system for missile defense in the next decade, if technically practicable?

MDA's budget supports design of a laser demonstrator that is potentially capable of acquiring, tracking, and even destroying an enemy missile. This is an approach that we've studied for many years and, if it proves out, could potentially, come at lower cost than the existing system of kinetic interceptors. However, leap-ahead technology must be paired with corresponding evolutions in doctrine, policy, concepts of operations, and other non-materiel considerations to be militarily useful.

DOD's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

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

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

Energy, and the State Department?

Yes. The Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program informally and formally coordinates on a regular basis with the Combatant Commands, other DoD partners, interagency partners including the Departments of State and Energy, and international partners on CTR Program WMD threat reduction efforts. Part of this interagency coordination includes placing Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) liaison officers at U.S. Embassies where programs are highly active to further enhance coordination of activities in country and in the immediate regions where engagements occur. Additionally, in order to eliminate duplication of efforts, ensure safety and security is being considered in health capacity building programs, and work together to develop effective and sustainable detection and reporting systems, CTR is working very closely with USG civilian agencies to plan and execute efforts that both meet threat reduction goals and contribute to the Global Health Security Agenda objectives.

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

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

The DoD CTR Program is designed to posture the United States to eliminate state-based WMD programs, if and when opportunities emerge. At the same time, numerous scientific, economic and demographic trends are increasing the risks that infectious diseases outbreaks pose to U.S. and global security, to include through natural transmission, bioterror attacks or laboratory accidents. Such outbreaks challenge our ability to protect the health of U.S. armed forces, U.S. citizens at home and abroad, and U.S. allies, drain economic resources, and ultimately risk undermining geopolitical stability. The Ebola Virus Disease outbreak demonstrated how, in an interconnected global environment, a bio-incident anywhere in the world can lead to dangerous consequences when governments are unable to provide basic health and diagnostic Services for their population. This creates environments in which destabilizing outbreaks can potentially provide terrorists with opportunities to gain access to deadly pathogens for their purposes due to insecure storage. For this reason, the percentage of funding devoted by the CTR Program at this time to reduce biological threats in the most vulnerable locations worldwide is appropriate.

Prompt Global Strike

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review concluded that the United States will continue to experiment with prompt global strike prototypes. There has been no decision to field a prompt global strike capability as the effort is early in the technology and testing phase. In your view, what is the role for a conventional prompt global strike capability in addressing the key threats to U.S. national security in the near future?

The Joint requirements process has identified the emerging challenge of high value, time sensitive, and defended targets that exist outside the range of conventional weapons systems. I support the continued evaluation of alternative technology and concepts that balance the potential operational employment against costs and the priority of this capability requirement.

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

If confirmed, I will assist acquisition officials in identifying the appropriate solutions to validated Joint military requirements. Unless an appropriate alternative is presented, I would expect to support a sea-based approach to fulfill this requirement as previously identified by the JROC.

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

If confirmed, I will lead periodic reviews of joint military requirements and assessments of Combatant Commander integrated priority lists to identify, assess, and approve the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy improvements necessary to close any intelligence gaps discovered in the development this requirement.

Nuclear Weapons and Stockpile Stewardship

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

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

Our ability to sustain a safe, secure, and effective stockpile rests largely on our people and our infrastructure. As a significant wave of personnel begins to retire over the next decade, we must recruit and retain the next-generation of nuclear weapons stewards capable of certifying the stockpile without underground testing. At the same time, we must remain vigilant about recapitalizing and modernizing the infrastructure we need to design and produce components required for our Life Extension Programs, even as we continue operations in aging facilities.

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

Our current nuclear stockpile is assessed as effective. It is certified and does not require further nuclear testing. I am committed to working with the Department of Energy to maintain the critical skills, capabilities, and infrastructure needed to ensure the safety, reliability, and security of the stockpile without underground testing if practicable.

However, the stockpile is aging. I understand there are, and will always be challenges in identifying and remedying the effects of aging on the stockpile. I would strongly consider recommendations from the Department of Energy and the National Laboratory Directors before making any recommendation to the Secretary and President regarding a need to resume underground testing.

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

Our non-deployed nuclear weapons stockpile allows us to manage risks of technical failures in our stockpile and changes in the geopolitical environment. Implementation of the 3+2 Strategy for nuclear weapons modernization will enable further reductions in the number of hedge warheads required. Furthermore, modernization of key production facilities will improve the responsiveness of the nuclear weapons infrastructure and may provide opportunities to make additional adjustments to the non-deployed hedge stockpile. I am committed to reducing the size of the stockpile to the lowest level consistent with deterrence objectives and warfighter requirements.

Countering the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Iraq & Syria

To “degrade and ultimately destroy the terrorist group known as ISIL” the Department of Defense seeks to deny ISIL safe-haven and build partner capacity.

If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate ISIL degradation and what is your assessment of the progress to degrade ISIL in Iraq and in Syria?

I view degraded capability as an inability to hold key terrain and influence population centers. As anti-ISIL forces in both Iraq and Syria gain momentum and achieve tactical and operational successes, I would consider ISIL’s failure to resupply or refit its fighters as additional indicators. Large groups of displaced persons returning to their homes in Tikrit and working to restore their former way of life serve as an example. By leveraging the resources of the U.S. Intelligence Community, the DoD will continue to analyze and assess ISIL capabilities, while identifying additional indicators of degradation.

Progress is being made. However, we must continue to exercise patience during the long campaign to degrade ISIL, and understand that our efforts cannot exceed those of our partnered ground forces in Iraq and Syria.

A large part of the support for ISIL and other violent extremist groups like al Nusra by the local Syrian population is based on the fact that these groups seek to remove President Assad from power.

What limitations, if any, do we face by failing to have the removal of Assad as an objective in Syria?

While seeking a negotiated political settlement is U.S. policy, the immediate objective is countering ISIL in both Syria and Iraq. Transition of power from the Assad regime may have implications and negative consequences on Syrian and regional stability, so it is important that we continue to work with our regional partners to counter both the threat of ISIL as well as sequencing an orderly transition from the Assad regime.

In Iraq, what is the importance of arming the Sunni tribes in Anbar province to degrading ISIL and how do you assess progress to date? What is your understanding of the current plan to train and equip Sunni fighters to help in the campaign against ISIL?

Sunni tribal mobilization is an important component of the counter-ISIL fight. They are a credible ground force we have only begun to empower, and they are necessary to protect Iraqis in Anbar and other Sunni-dominant areas. I understand PM Abadi and the GOI continue to make marginal gains mobilizing Sunni tribes, but much work remains. We must continue to pressure the GOI to embrace the integration of these tribes into Iraqi Security Forces' efforts. U.S. and Coalition support at airbases like Al Asad and Al Taqaddum are enhancing these efforts.

What is your assessment of the fall of Ramadi to ISIL last month and what recommendations, if any, would you have for the U.S. and coalition strategy, if you are confirmed?

Ramadi was a tactical setback, and I certainly expect setbacks, as well as gains, over the course of a 36-month campaign to degrade ISIL. Despite tactical or operational shifts in either direction, I believe our strategy remains the correct one. This is a whole-of-government strategy and, at times, may require an adjustment to the military campaign to allow the non-military aspects of the strategy the time and space required to succeed.

What is your assessment of the coalition air campaign in Iraq and Syria and what recommendations, if any, would you have for the air campaign, if you are confirmed?

ISIL's critical enablers are its ability to move rapidly through ungoverned regions and their ability to generate revenue, both of which are degraded and disrupted by the Coalition air campaign. The air campaign also creates time and space for local ground forces to develop their capability as legitimate security forces. Anti-ISIL forces' successes, including the recapture of Tal Abyad, were enabled by Coalition strikes.

The legitimacy of the Coalition and the success of the air strikes are also dependent on our commitment to minimize collateral damage. I support tactical patience and commander's decisions to withhold munitions in situations where strike effects could be detrimental to local forces or civilian populations. We should continue to avoid the trap of pursuing short-term tactical gains over the long-term strategic effects of losing the support of our partners in both Syria and Iraq.

Does the current troop limitation of 3,100 give U.S. commanders, in conjunction with Iraqi security forces, Kurdish Peshmerga, tribal and local security forces, and coalition partners, in Iraq enough capability to successfully degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL?

Yes, I believe our current troop levels are sufficient to advance the military lines of effort in the near term. I understand our strategy depends on a credible ground force in Iraq, and our commitments must align with the capability and pace of our Iraqi partners. Iraqis must own this fight, and we may require adjustments in our troop commitments to continue to enable their forces over the long term.

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

The Office of Security Cooperation is the Department's primary interlocutor for traditional security assistance and cooperation in support of the U.S. Embassy. OSC-I supports the development of military programs to improve the professionalization of the Iraqi Security Forces in concert with providing warfighting capability through the Foreign Military Sales program.

What is your assessment of the success of the current strategy against ISIL?

We are seeing some successes, but we need to take a long view and understand that there will be both successes and failures early in the campaign. In both Iraq and Syria, ISIL's ability to conduct massed offensive operations is degraded, its leadership cells are pressured, and its command-and-control and supply lines are being severed. We have reduced ISIL's oil production, processing and transportation infrastructure. We continue to work the military lines effort with our coalition partners and in conjunction with all lines of effort in the strategy.

Do you assess that the training and equipping of Syrian opposition fighters by the United States and coalition partners under section 1209 of the FY2015 NDAA will produce enough fighters to make a strategic difference on the battlefield in Syria?

From my understanding, it's too early to tell. The number of Syrians who are currently volunteering to participate in the Syria Train and Equip program is growing. The current number of trainees is small but are properly vetted and have objectives that match our own. Larger numbers of unknown or unqualified trainees would not necessarily be better and might work counter to our interests. It will take time to establish a credible partner on the ground in Syria and we are continuously making adjustments based on our lessons learned as we progress.

In your view, what military support, if any, should the Syrian opposition fighters who receive support under section 1209 of the FY2015 NDAA need from the United States and coalition partners when they return to Syria?

The U. S. is committed to their success. We will be providing basic equipment such as military gear, mobility capabilities such as trucks and vehicles, and small arms and ammunition. If confirmed, I will examine the full range of support that we can provide our T&E forces as the program progresses.

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

I think an important lesson we can take from our Iraq and Afghanistan experiences is that withdrawal decisions must be conditions-based. I also think we have learned that a military solution alone does not guarantee success. Governance and economic development are required to sustain military and security gains. When security threats are fueled by underlying political or sectarian problems U.S. troops can only address the effects, not the cause.

Afghanistan Campaign

What is your assessment of the progress of the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan?

Overall, the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) continue to grow their tactical proficiency. However, the lack of a Minister of Defense has had a negative impact on the Resolute Support mission. Critical gaps still remain in aviation, intelligence, and special operations, all impacting the ANDSF's targeting capability. These gaps will remain for some time, even with the addition of key enablers. RS advisors continue to address developmental shortfalls in the areas of logistics, medical support, and counter-IED exploitation.

In May of 2014 President Obama said "...by the end of 2016, our military will draw down to a normal embassy presence in Kabul..."

What is your understanding of what military forces comprise a "normal embassy presence"?

A normal embassy presence will have a counter-terrorism and security component consisting of a Defense Attaché Office and a Security Cooperation Office under a Senior Defense Official with a military reporting chain through CENTCOM. CENTCOM is still planning for the Security Cooperation Office – Afghanistan. Its size will depend upon factors such as security force assistance objectives, ANDSF capabilities, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) requests, and force protection concerns.

What lessons should we learn from the experience the drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq as applied to the drawdown of U.S. and international troops in Afghanistan?

The transfer of security cooperation activities should be deliberate and measured. "Time" allows for the ownership of the tactical fight to be transferred from coalition forces to the ANDSF; allowing the coalition to focus on issues, critical to the long term viability of the force. The ANDSF continues to prove that they are capable of executing the tactical fight; however, sustainment and institutional development are critical to their long term success.

If confirmed, are there changes you would recommend to the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan?

Not at this time, but if confirmed I will continually assess and offer recommendations as that strategy unfolds.

What is the effect of ISIL operations in Afghanistan and/or coordination with the Taliban for the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan?

The coalition and the Afghan government have closely watched ISIL's attempt to expand its reach to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The potential emergence of ISIL has sharply focused the ANDSF, NDS, and Afghan political leadership, which are collaborating closely in order to prevent this threat from expanding. We will continue to support Afghanistan's security through our strategic partnership. It is important to note, ISIL is a competitor with other groups in Afghanistan, which may lead to increased violence between extremist groups.

If security conditions on the ground in Afghanistan degrade in 2016, would you recommend to the President revisions to the size and pace of the drawdown plan in order to adequately address those security conditions?

We must be willing to reevaluate assumptions of previous recommendations and assess the conditions on the ground as the drawdown takes place. If confirmed, I will collaborate with CENTCOM to assess conditions on the ground and will modify my input to the Chairman's recommendations to the President accordingly.

Should the authorities granted to the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan take into account the security conditions on the ground faced by U.S. troops?

Yes. Protecting the force is an inherent responsibility of command.

Afghanistan National Security Forces

What is your assessment of the progress in developing a professional and effective Afghanistan National Security Force (ANSF) and what recommendations would you make to address challenges to building ANSF capacity, if confirmed?

Based on my interaction with the Joint Staff subject matter experts, it is my understanding that the ANDSF are tactically capable, but continue to be challenged at the Corps and Ministerial levels. We assess the ANDSF's capabilities, capacities, and morale will be sufficient to set the conditions for Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation talks. The ANDSF still need assistance with enablers and related systems and processes necessary to run a modern, professional army and police force. In particular, they need sustained support for capability gaps in aviation, intelligence, sustainment, and special operations. To address these gaps, our advisory mission and mentorship at the security ministries and at the corps and police zone level remain vital.

Do you support plans for building and sustaining the ANSF at 352,000 personnel and, if so, what factors influence your recommendation about the proper size of the ANSF?

Yes, at least for the near term. Although we've made important gains, GIROA and the ANDSF will continue to face threats from external regional actors and internal threats from a resilient insurgency. The current ANDSF Plan of Record supports the need for 352,000 ANDSF along with 30,000 ALP at least through 2018. Evaluating the security situation (and prior assumptions) is continual and drives my recommendations on ANDSF size. Committed contributions from

partners are also important. Afghan and NATO goals remain generally congruent regarding the denial of terrorist safe havens.

Reconciliation

In your view, what should be the role of the United States in any reconciliation negotiations with the Afghan Taliban and other insurgent groups?

The United States supports an Afghan-led political process to determine the future of their country. Our relationship with Pakistan as a key stakeholder in the region can also have a positive impact. As part of the outcome of any process, the Taliban and other armed Afghan opposition groups must end violence, break any associations with international terrorism, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including its protections for women and minorities.

What additional steps, if any, should the United States take to advance the reconciliation process?

We remain strongly supportive of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned reconciliation process where the Taliban and the Afghans engage in direct talks to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. In President Ghani's inauguration address, he called on the Taliban to enter political talks, and has made reconciliation central to his foreign policy. We can also continue to encourage stronger ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan—and have been pleased with their recent efforts to address their shared security concerns.

In your view, what should be the role of Afghanistan's neighbors, in particular Pakistan, in the reconciliation process?

Regional partners have an important role to play in enabling a stable, democratic Afghanistan, and our relationship with Pakistan as a key stakeholder in the region can have a positive impact. We continue to encourage all regional partners to support President Ghani's reconciliation efforts. We are in close communication with President Ghani on these matters and we remain committed to supporting his efforts toward peace.

U.S. Strategic Relationship with Pakistan

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

Our strategic interests and national security goals remain to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al Qaeda (and other potential transnational insurgent threats) and to prevent the return of safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We also have an interest in a stable Pakistan and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology.

What would you consider to be areas of shared strategic interest between the United States and Pakistan?

The U.S. and Pakistan share the common goals of eliminating Al Qaeda (and other potential transnational insurgent threats), promoting regional stability and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology.

In what areas do you see U.S. and Pakistani strategic interests diverging?

We diverge from Pakistan in their policy on leveraging non-state, extremist proxies to attain their national security objectives and in their perception of Indian intentions in the region. Our bilateral interests with Pakistan can also be made more complex by Pakistan's deepening ties with China.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend for U.S. relations with Pakistan, particularly in terms of military-to-military relations?

The U.S.-Pakistan relationship is important to our vital national security interests in the region and will remain so for the foreseeable future. We will need to continue cooperating with Pakistan on defeating transnational insurgent threats, supporting Pakistan stability, and reaching a lasting peace in Afghanistan. We should continue mil-to-mil cooperation to improve on ways we can assist enhanced border security and stability, consistent with Leahy considerations.

U.S. Assistance to Pakistan

Since 2001, the United States has provided significant military assistance to Pakistan. In addition, the United States has provided significant funds to reimburse Pakistan for the costs associated with military operations conducted by Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

As U.S. troop presence draws down in Afghanistan, what recommendations, if any, would you have regarding the reduction or cessation of Coalition Support Funds that currently reimburse Pakistan for military support in connection with U.S. military operations in Afghanistan?

It is in our best interest to have a long term strategic partnership with Pakistan. Coalition Support Funds are a mechanism to advance our security interests with and through Pakistan, however the funding needs to be tied to a broader set of expectations and outcomes, not just ongoing border operations in Pakistan.

In your view, how effective has the assistance and other support that the United States has provided to Pakistan been in promoting U.S. interests?

U.S.-Pakistan mutually agreed security objectives include improving Pakistan's capacity to counter militancy, developing a stronger bilateral defense relationship, and fostering a better relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. In support of these objectives, U.S.

security assistance has enhanced the Pakistan Military's ability to attack militants, terrorists groups, and other transnational threats. U.S. assistance has bolstered Pakistani capability while also preserving the mil-mil relationship that is a key component of the U.S.-Pakistan strategic partnership.

Do you support conditioning U.S. assistance and other support to Pakistan on Pakistan's continued cooperation in areas of mutual security interest?

Yes. It is important that we maintain a strategic relationship with Pakistan, not a "transactional" one, as we condition our assistance.

What is your assessment of the current relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

There is some potential for a more constructive "new normal" going forward. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have improved since the election of President Ghani in Afghanistan. Although gradual, the two sides continue to work to improve border coordination and establish standards for information sharing, communication, and complementary operations near the border.

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

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

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

We have received support from Pakistan in the use of their GLOCs. Currently we rely on multiple GLOCs, including Pakistan's to support our operations in Afghanistan. We do not anticipate any GLOC problems in the foreseeable future.

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

Pakistan suffers significant casualties as a result of IED attacks. They are taking concrete steps to disrupt the networks, placing new restrictions on the distribution of precursor materials and providing Regional Leadership on the issue. We continue to encourage and pressure them to do more.

Iran

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

Iran's authoritarian regime poses both a regional and global security threat. The world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism seeks to export its revolutionary ideology in the Middle East through a large conventional army; terrorist proxies; weapons trafficking; ballistic missile proliferation; and maritime weapons and threats to the Strait of Hormuz. Through its emergent nuclear and established cyber programs, Iran can threaten and undermine the international institutions and conventions that underpin global security. The Supreme Leader will continue to take advantage of opportunities to enable Iran's domestic, hardline political factions' malign policies that value regime survival over international integration.

What is your assessment of the threat of Iran's influence in Iraq to U.S. interests?

Iran's ambitions in Iraq are not to help create a sovereign, functional government. Iran wants to influence Iraq through the lens of a Shia-dominated buffer state. Currently, Iran is using its influence vis-à-vis Shia militias to offset ISIL behavior. This comes with the risk that one day these militias could possibly threaten Iraqi or U.S. forces. In the future, expect Iran to utilize its political and military instruments of power to control Iraq along sectarian lines.

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

Real or perceived U.S. disengagement from the Middle East could create opportunity for Iran to increase its support to terrorist organizations. Right-sized U.S. military presence in the Middle East demonstrates not only a commitment to the region, but a commitment to our regional security partners. As a result, a continued U.S. military presence in the region will further deter Iran from conducting nefarious activities such as blocking the Strait of Hormuz or threatening other Gulf States. Finally, a continued U.S. military presence in the region is the single most important indicator of our overall commitment to a secure, peaceful and prosperous Middle East.

Negotiations on the Iran nuclear program have been extended with a deadline now of July 7, 2015 to finalize a comprehensive agreement.

What are the elements of a nuclear agreement with Iran that you consider critical to ensuring that it is a "good" deal for U.S. national security interests?

From a security standpoint, important outcomes include rolling back Iran's nuclear program providing the international community with necessary access and transparency, while preserving the sanctions imposed on conventional arms and ballistic missiles.

If Iran is allowed to maintain a monitored and limited uranium enrichment program, do you believe that other states in the region may seek to develop enrichment programs of their own and why or why not?

Saudi Arabia's and other Gulf countries' decisions on whether or not to enrich uranium are not solely tied to a deal with Iran; under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) signatories are allowed enrichment programs as part of a peaceful nuclear program. Unlike Iran, which endures sanctions, isolation, and economic distress due to a covert attempt intent on developing nuclear weapons, our Gulf partners could choose to pursue nuclear energy in compliance with the NPT. The U.S. military will continue to provide options in support of the overall U.S. strategy.

What role, if any, should DOD play in countering Iran's support of international terrorism?

DoD's role is to support an interagency and regional effort to deter and counter Iran's support of international terrorism. We deter Iran by maintaining a responsive military capability in the region and ensuring a robust defensive infrastructure for ourselves and our allies. To counter Iran, we work by, with, and through partner nations by conducting counter terrorism training, providing equipment sales, participating in multi-national exercises, and sharing information. When combined, these efforts—along with those of our partners—help to weaken terrorist groups and hinder Iran's ability to support them.

The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force

What is your understanding of the scope and duration of the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), including with respect to military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant?

There is an ongoing armed conflict between the United States and Al Qaeda, including its associated forces. Al Qaeda's associated forces are those groups that (1) are an organized armed group that has entered the fight alongside Al Qaeda and, (2) is a co-belligerent with Al Qaeda in hostilities against the United States or its coalition partners. The AUMF enacted following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 remains the legal basis under U.S. domestic law for use of military force against these threats. Since September 2014, the Administration has applied the 2001 AUMF for the use of military force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, previously known as Al Qaeda in Iraq). ISIL has been subject to the use of force under the AUMF since at least 2004, when it entered the conflict against the United States as part of the Al Qaeda organization. Despite internal power struggles within ISIL and other factions of the Al Qaeda network, ISIL asserts that it is the true heir to bin Laden's legacy of global jihad, and continues its unlawful campaign against the United States, its citizens, and interests.

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

Yes. The 2001 AUMF provides the necessary authorities to counter Al Qaeda and its associated forces, including ISIL. With respect to ISIL, the 2002 AUMF provides additional statutory authority for the current operations against ISIL both in Iraq and, to extent necessary to achieve the purposes of that AUMF, in Syria.

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

What is your assessment of the threat posed by ISIL to the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and Western interests more broadly?

ISIL does pose a threat to the homeland as well as to U.S and Western interests abroad. ISIL is focused on strengthening its self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria as well as expanding into other areas in the Middle East and Africa. In so doing, ISIL is integrating foreign fighters that could attempt to return to their countries as operatives. In addition, ISIL sympathizers pose a risk should they heed ISIL calls to conduct attacks against the U.S and the West.

How would you describe the U.S. strategy to counter ISIL?

Our strategy is a whole-of-government and regional approach to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL. Our strategy leverages capable ground partners supported by an International Coalition. The nine lines of effort serve as a guide to achieve this objective, and include: supporting effective governance in Iraq, disrupting ISIL's finances, disrupting the flow of foreign fighters, and protecting the homeland. DoD is only primarily responsible for the military campaign to deny ISIL safe haven and build partner capacity. Coalition kinetic strike operations, advise/assist operations, training/equipping efforts, and posture in the region combine to achieve these lines of efforts. The military campaign provides time and space for progress in the other lines of effort, particularly inclusive governance.

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of that strategy in achieving its objectives?

We are seeing limited but steady success, and we need to be patient as there will be both successes and failures throughout the campaign. In both Iraq and Syria, ISIL's ability to conduct massed-offensive operations is degraded, its leadership cells are pressured, and its command-and-control and supply lines are being severed. We have degraded ISIL's oil producing, processing and transportation infrastructure. We continue to work with our coalition partners along several lines of effort to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIL. We must also be wary of ISIL's destabilizing potential outside of Iraq and Syria and leverage our regional partnerships accordingly.

What do you assess to be the greatest impediments to implementing the strategy to counter ISIL?

Conflicting interests on the ground and rampant sectarianism combined with poor governance and disenfranchised populations are the greatest challenges to defeating ISIL. Only through governments that foster inclusive and legitimate governance, as well as through robust commitments from regional and international stakeholders, will the strategy be successful.

What modifications, if any, would you recommend be made to the strategy to counter ISIL, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will support the Chairman's assessment of the military lines of effort to ensure that they are providing the time and space necessary for the non-military lines of effort to succeed. I also will work to identify additional opportunities to bolster our ongoing efforts to train and equip security forces operating in Iraq and Syria, and recommend adjustments to increase their effectiveness if necessary. Finally, I would look for opportunities to combat ISILs trans-regional reach and influence to complement the efforts in Iraq and Syria. Continued assessment and refinement are paramount to any strategy and its implementation.

Al Qaeda

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

Despite ongoing counterterrorism (CT) pressure and competition from ISIL, Al Qaeda and its affiliates continue to threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and Western interests more broadly. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains the affiliate of most concern.

Yemen and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

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

The 2015 National Security Strategy states "the U.S. has no greater responsibility than protecting the American people. Yet, our obligations do not end at our borders." The continued presence of AQAP in Yemen and the emergence of ISIL present threats to our homeland and to the American people. We act in Yemen in the interest of our security.

What is your assessment of current U.S. strategy in Yemen?

I believe the U.S. should continue its policy of support to the Republic of Yemen Government (RoYG) in combatting terrorism and addressing instability within its borders. The U.S. requires a stable and reliable partner in order to accomplish its counterterrorism objective of countering AQAP and violent extremist organizations.

We seek stability in Yemen through: 1) political transition, namely National Dialogue, Constitutional reform, and Elections; 2) continued economic and humanitarian assistance; and 3) security reform, specifically counterterrorism capacity building, border security, and critical infrastructure protection.

What are the implications of recent events in Yemen for U.S. counterterrorism policy both in Yemen and globally?

I believe the current conflict in Yemen has hampered some CT operations, but the U.S. still maintains a capability, albeit diminished, to counter AQAP. AQAP remains an immediate threat to Yemen, the region, and the United States. When the political and security situation allows, I believe we should resume our previous partner-based DoD counterterrorism activities with the Yemeni government.

What is your assessment of the effectiveness and capability of coalition operations led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen?

Saudi-led Coalition operations can be sustained at least in the near term. Airstrikes are slowing Huthi expansion in Yemen, but have not prevented Huthi attacks along the Saudi border nor forced the Huthis to withdraw from cities they captured earlier this year.

Somalia and Al Shabab

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

Al-Shabaab poses a threat to countries providing forces to AMISOM such as Kenya. The group also targets Somali government facilities and Western targets in and around Mogadishu.

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

Al-Shabaab does not currently directly threaten the U.S. Homeland or Europe. The group continues to pose a threat to U.S., Western, and allied interests in East Africa, to include Somalia and Kenya.

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

The U.S. strategy on Somalia was implemented in May 2014. It has two major security components: (1) Supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia to stabilize security in the short term, and (2) Expanding support for the creation and training of the Somali National Army, which will provide long term stability and security. DoD contributes significant assets towards the U.S. strategy's success.

What role should DOD play in building the capacity of the Somali national military forces?

The Department of State has been leading efforts to create Somali security services that are loyal to the federal government and representative of the ethnic and clan diversity in Somalia. I believe DoD should continue to support that effort through building partner capacity, logistics, and encouraging joint operations with the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)?

Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and affiliated groups continue to target local and regional government and Western interests. The group poses a threat to the Malian

government and military targets, and Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) forces and facilities, and U.S. and Western persons in Niger and Mali, who are vulnerable to kidnapping for ransom.

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

AQIM does not pose a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. The group currently does not view conducting attacks outside North Africa and the Sahel as a priority.

What capacity has AQIM demonstrated to plan and carry out actions threatening U.S. interests?

AQIM is able to threaten U.S. and Western interests within North and West Africa, where it has conducted or attempted attacks in several countries to include Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Mauritania. AQIM will likely strengthen its ties to other Al Qaeda-associated terrorist groups in the region to influence and support attack planning.

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

AQIM has increased freedom of movement throughout the region and implemented its own brand of sharia in the breakaway northern territories in Mali. AQIM uses small-scale improvised explosive device (IED), indirect fire (IDF), and mortar attacks to further conduct attacks in northern Mali to expel Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Libya

What is your assessment of the current security situation in Libya?

Libya currently has two governments competing for control, and their aligned militias are struggling to establish dominance of the country. However, at this point neither government is capable of providing domestic security or addressing transnational threats, such as terrorism or the ongoing migration crisis.

What is your understanding of the U.S. strategy with regards to Libya and the role of DOD in that strategy?

I believe the U.S. maintains a national interest in stabilizing Libya and impeding extremists from using it as a refuge. The U.S. and our allies support the United Nations-led efforts to help the opposing Libyan groups reach a political resolution by establishing a national unity government. The role of DoD in the U.S. strategy is to use military relationships with regional partners to increase support for a political solution. Should diplomatic efforts to form a unity government succeed, I believe the U.S. should be prepared to revisit security assistance programs for legitimate Libyan security services.

How would you assess its effectiveness in achieving its objectives?

Libya's political landscape is fragmented and the country is embroiled in a civil war. UN-led negotiations have yet to yield lasting results. I believe the DoD's role in a political solution is necessary, but alone it is not enough to drive resolution. ,

What do you assess to be the greatest impediments to implementing the strategy and **protecting U.S. interests in Libya?**

I believe the greatest obstruction is the severe division of Libya's political and security landscape, which has seriously complicated negotiations. Libya has degenerated into a complex mix of competing political factions, tribes, militias and other armed groups which are intermixed with local and foreign extremists. These influences continue to make protecting U.S. interests in Libya difficult.

What is your assessment of the threat to the U.S. and our allies from terrorist groups, including ISIL, in Libya.

Extremists and terrorists from Al Qaeda -affiliated and allied groups are using Libya's permissive security environment as a safe haven to plot attacks, including against Western interests in Libya and the region. ISIL considers Libya a key part of its caliphate and ISIL-aligned extremists are trying to institute sharia law in parts of the country.

North Africa

In recent years, there has been a growth of terrorist networks, capabilities, operations, and safe havens throughout North and East Africa, including groups that have the intention to target U.S. and Western interests. In the face of growing instability and threats, the U.S. counterterrorism effort in the region has been described as an "economy of force" effort.

Do you agree with that characterization of the situation in North and East Africa and the U.S. counterterrorism efforts to combat the related threats?

Diverse and active terrorist networks in North and East Africa (as well as West Africa) are seeking to influence local resources and territory. Some have, at times, also demonstrated a willingness to target U.S. and Western interests. These groups threaten the stability of our regional partners and safety of local civilians. AFRICOM, in partnership with host nations and interagency partners, is working to identify, prioritize, and target these networks.

What is your assessment of the current U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the region? In your view, is the U.S. military allocating adequate resources to effectively address the terrorism threat in the region?

I believe the U.S. military is allocating adequate resources based on the level of threat and the potential for collaboration with capable partner nations. If confirmed, I will continuously

evaluate the adequacy of our strategy and allocation of resources, especially following changes in local threat levels and when new opportunities for potential collaboration with our partners arise.

General Rodriguez noted in his March 2014 testimony that “North Africa is a significant source of foreign fighters in the current conflict in Syria.” What is your understanding of the foreign fighter flow from North Africa to the conflict in Syria and Iraq?

The largest portion of foreign fighters entering Iraq and Syria come from North Africa, specifically Tunisia, Morocco, Libya and Algeria. Many of the fighters however are now choosing to stay in North Africa and join the ISIL affiliate in Libya instead.

In your view, is it likely that many of these fighters will eventually return home from Syria and Iraq to North Africa and continue their fight against regional governments?

Yes, many Northern African foreign fighters will likely return home to conduct attacks in their home countries. We do not know if these fighters are being tasked by ISIL to attack Western of U.S. interests or whether, having been radicalized by ISIL are acting on their own accord.

Russia

Crimea was formally annexed when President Putin signed a bill to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014, and Russia continues to fuel instability in eastern Ukraine despite signing ceasefire agreements in September 2014 and February 2015.

How effective do you assess the sanctions of the U.S. and the European Union have been in deterring additional aggression by Russia?

I believe sanctions by themselves are unlikely to deter future Russian aggression. Deterring combined Russian-separatists actions against Ukraine requires a whole of government approach in concert with Europe and NATO. Nevertheless, it's my understanding that U.S. and EU sanctions have impacted Russia's economy and I believe they send a clear signal to Moscow that aggression against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity entails costs. With the EU's recent decision to extend sanctions for an additional six months, the United States and EU have made clear that sanctions will not be lifted until Minsk is fully implemented. I believe these actions have contributed to deterrence.

What other specific U.S. actions helped to deter additional Russian aggression in Eastern Europe?

Congressional support for the European Reassurance Initiative has enabled DoD, via Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE (OAR), to conduct military exercises and training on land, in the air and at sea, while sustaining a rotational presence across Europe; and increase the responsiveness of U.S. forces to reinforce NATO by exploring initiatives such as prepositioning of equipment and enhancing reception facilities in Europe. Our bilateral efforts

as well as our continued support of NATO adaptation measures all support the goal of deterring additional Russian aggression.

What additional steps, if any, are likely to prove most effective at deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe?

If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our current measures and I will remain alert to potential adjustments. Of key concern to me is wisely channeling U.S. military efforts and resources to ensure our allies and partners are militarily capable and interoperable.

Are you concerned that Moldova and Georgia may be at a heightened state of vulnerability given Russian willingness to take aggressive action in Ukraine?

Yes. Russia has demonstrated both in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine today its willingness to use force and exploit the vulnerabilities of these fragile democracies to achieve its strategic objectives. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine all contain Russian occupied separatist regions that Russia could potentially exploit for its own purposes.

Russian tactics in eastern Ukraine have been called “hybrid” and combine hard power with soft power, including elements such as lethal security assistance to separatists, the use of special operations forces, extensive information operations, withholding energy supplies and economic pressure.

If confirmed, what steps would you recommend as part of a strategy to counter this “hybrid” approach?

I believe we must continue to take actions which deter Russian aggression, remain alert to its strategic capabilities, and most importantly help our allies and partners resist Russian coercion over the long term. I will continue to emphasize training activities, rotational presence, and capacity-building to make our partners more resilient against asymmetric threats and demonstrate U.S. resolve.

In light of Russia’s actions in 2014, what do you believe are appropriate objectives for U.S.-Russian security relations?

Although we disagree with Russia’s recent conduct against its neighbors and will continue with our efforts to deter future actions, I will leave open the possibility for collaboration with Russia in areas of mutual national security interests. If confirmed, I will also keep lines of communication with my Russian counterpart open as a means for crisis management.

NATO Alliance

The reemergence of an aggressive Russia has resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) developing the Readiness Action Plan that NATO Secretary General

Jens Stoltenberg called “the biggest reinforcement of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War.” NATO also continues to be central to our coalition operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, even as many NATO members have significantly reduced their national defense budgets in response to economic and fiscal pressures.

How important is the NATO alliance to U.S. national security interests?

The Alliance is critical to our national security interests. This involves both Article 5 and other non-Article 5 related NATO operations. NATO maintains a persistent air, land, and maritime presence in and around the territories of our European allies, committed to defend its territory against any aggression. But its efforts extend beyond Article 5 with military operations supporting stability in Kosovo, Afghanistan, the Mediterranean Sea, and off the Horn of Africa. NATO is also assisting nations in North Africa and the Middle East to develop local capabilities to counter growing instability and transnational threats to prevent those threats from spreading to Europe.

In light of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine, what do you see as the major strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years and what are the greatest challenges in meeting those objectives?

As a result of Russia’s aggressive actions, NATO has refocused its attention on the Alliance’s Article 5 responsibilities to protect and defend its territory and populations against attack. Concurrently, NATO must also continue to perform its other “core tasks” of crisis management and cooperative security. Among the challenges to achieving these objectives are: first, declining national defense budgets that result in capability shortfalls; and second, the required adaptation of NATO’s institutional processes to the changing European security environment.

What do you see as the proper role, if any, for NATO in addressing the threat posed by ISIL and in addressing the problem of illegal immigration across the Mediterranean Sea?

Due to its long-standing partnerships and experience with Defense Capacity Building missions, NATO has the potential to play a role in addressing both issues. Within Iraq, NATO could provide expert advice and capacity-building support to the Government of Iraq in areas such as security sector reform and the development of a national security strategy. To address illegal immigration across the Mediterranean Sea, NATO could potentially support efforts of the Mediterranean Allied nations and the European Union by sharing information gathered through its maritime operations in the Mediterranean Sea.

The concept of defense cooperation among NATO members was emphasized at the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.

What areas or projects would you recommend, if confirmed, that NATO nations cooperate in to improve NATO alliance capabilities?

Cooperation among Allies on developing capabilities provides a cost effective approach to addressing global challenges. If confirmed, I would urge Allies to increase their defense investments in both national and multinational projects and areas that address Alliance capability

needs, such as developing command and control and joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and maintaining and improving readiness and interoperability. In support of that objective, I would also encourage Allies to honor their recent Summit pledge to achieve the two percent defense spending target.

Turkey continues to be a gateway for foreign fighters proceeding to and from Syria and Iraq.

What steps would you recommend to encourage Turkey to continue to address the threat posed by foreign fighters proceeding to and returning from Syria and Iraq?

If confirmed, I would support the Department's contributions to interagency support of Turkish efforts to enhance border security, to include strengthening critical information sharing with the Turkish military. Moreover, I would support international efforts to help source countries identify and disrupt foreign fighter transit to Turkey.

At the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014, NATO leaders declared their "aim to move towards the 2% guideline [of GDP for defense spending] within a decade with a view to meeting their NATO Capability Targets and filling NATO's capability shortfalls."

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

There is a direct correlation between national defense budget cuts and increased Alliance capability shortfalls, such as in joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. To arrest this negative trend, Allies need to be held to the Defense Investment Pledge they agreed to at the Wales Summit. If confirmed, I will work with Allies on defense planning to ensure they maintain or develop the specific capabilities that the Alliance is lacking.

What are the greatest military capability shortfalls that you see in the NATO alliance?

The most significant shortfalls are in so-called enabling capabilities such as joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, air to air refueling and strategic lift. These limited capabilities are the ones that the Alliance places heavy reliance on the United States to provide. If confirmed, I would encourage Allies to invest in developing these capabilities through national and multinational efforts.

In light of the reductions in national defense spending by some NATO members, are you concerned that the Alliance will lack critical military capabilities? If so, what steps, if any, would you recommend be taken to address potential shortfalls in Alliance capabilities?

I am concerned about continued reductions in defense investment by our Allies because Alliance capability shortfalls will increase as national defense spending decreases, thus requiring a greater

reliance on U.S. capabilities. The most effective step to counter these potential capability shortfalls is to arrest the decline in national defense investment and move to meet the Defense Investment Pledge that was agreed upon at the NATO Summit in Wales.

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

NATO's evolving security environment, highlighted by the events witnessed in both the Middle East and Europe, has made it necessary for NATO to adapt its political, military and institutional processes and focus. Our President and other NATO leaders have committed to this adaptation that will make NATO more responsive and ready to face future challenges. This commitment to adaptation provides the greatest opportunity for NATO; gaining the consensus to do this in a focused, proactive manner will be the greatest challenge.

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

The 2010 Strategic Concept for the Alliance states NATO will remain a nuclear alliance for as long as nuclear weapons exist. Allies reaffirmed this stance with both the 2012 NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review and the 2014 Wales Summit. I support NATO maintaining the full range of capabilities necessary to ensure Alliance security, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities.

U.S. Force Posture in Europe

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

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

Europe is the home of most of our willing and capable Allies and partners. Our immediate security interests include helping Europe defend against potential security threats from Russia and violent extremists from the south as well as continued strategic interest in reassuring our Allies and partners of the United States' unquestionable commitment to NATO.

Do you believe that additional consolidation and reductions of U.S. forces in Europe are consistent with U.S. strategic interests in that AOR given the increase in Russian aggression in the last 15 months?

Yes. Regarding facilities, we are maintaining a strong commitment to security and stability in Europe as the Department gains efficiencies through the Secretary's directed European Infrastructure Consolidation. Regarding forces, our focus on rotational presence is consistent with our strategic interests and existing resource constraints. However, the credibility and

effectiveness of our response to Russian aggression in the East depend not only on the operational scale and geographic scope of our operations, but also on their persistence and longevity. If confirmed, I will seek to ensure the persistent, appropriate level of rotational presence is retained in Europe to effectively deter Russian aggression.

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

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

Are you satisfied with the rebalance efforts to date?

Yes. The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, as announced by the President, incorporated in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, and reinforced by the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, has resulted in a significant rebalancing of U.S. force structure and capabilities to this region, commensurate with its vital importance to U.S. security interests and global peace and prosperity. As we look ahead, we will continue to prioritize the Asia-Pacific region for positioning our most advanced capabilities that are critical for the future operational environment. If confirmed, I will continue to support the ongoing efforts to increase the Department's presence in the region and invest in and deploy critical advanced capabilities.

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

First and foremost, we must work tirelessly to protect security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, which is vital to the prosperity of all Pacific nations. The U.S. faces a range of challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, including provocations by the DPRK and the growth of its ballistic missile programs, the emergence of new technologies intended to prevent open access to the air and maritime domain, widespread natural disasters and transnational threats, and territorial disputes.

To address these challenges, I believe the Department must continue to modernize U.S. alliances and partnerships, which provide a critical role in underwriting regional security. The Department should also continue to strengthen our ability to deter threats to the U.S. homeland and our allies and citizens overseas, enhance U.S. force posture and capabilities in the region, specifically in terms of intelligence surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) and missile defense, work with China to encourage greater transparency about how it will use its growing military capabilities; and encourage the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes in accordance with international law.

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

Yes. As stated in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, the United States has prioritized its ability to maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region through presence and power

projection. The Department remains committed to the rebalance despite the challenges of fiscal uncertainty and ongoing operations in the Middle East. U.S. long-term economic and security interests are inextricably linked to developments in the Asia-Pacific region, and the Department will continue to prioritize investments in those capabilities most relevant to the region.

As the United States realigns its forces in the Asia-Pacific Theater, do you believe we have the air and maritime lift required to support the distribution of Marines across North and Southeast Asia?

I believe we will need more lift in certain contingencies, but we have enough capacity for a range of scenarios. That said, it is critical for the U.S. military to evolve its forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region to respond to the changing strategic environment. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Services and U.S. Pacific Command to address this challenge.

Kosovo

Approximately 700 U.S. troops remain in the Balkans as part of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) that first deployed to Kosovo in 1999 and today is comprised of over 4,600 personnel from 30 countries. Spikes in violence in 2011 required the deployment of the NATO Operational Reserve Force battalion of approximately 600 soldiers to bolster KFOR and maintain a secure environment. Progress is required in both the military and political realms before further troop reductions can be made.

What major lines of effort do you think are required to further reduce or eliminate U.S. and NATO presence in Kosovo?

Continuation of the EU's implementation of the 2013 Brussels Accord between Serbia and Kosovo is a fundamental line of effort, necessary to stabilizing the Western Balkans and setting the conditions for improved security and follow-on troop reductions.

In your view, can the European Union play a more significant role in Kosovo?

The EU already plays a significant role in fostering improved security and stability in Kosovo through its European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX-Kosovo). EULEX is part of the EU's broader effort to promote peace and stability in the Western Balkans and supports Kosovo, as they adopt and implement necessary reforms on its path toward a greater European integration.

Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula

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

North Korea's ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities present a serious and direct threat to U.S. forces postured in the Asia-Pacific region as well as to our regional allies and partners. These capabilities could eventually pose a direct threat to United States territory. Moreover, North Korea's history of proliferation amplifies the dangers of its asymmetric programs. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S.-ROK Alliance continues to strengthen alliance capabilities to counter North Korea's increasing missile and nuclear threat. I will also ensure that we draw upon the full range of our capabilities to protect against and respond to North Korean ballistic missile and WMD threats.

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

If confirmed, I will continue efforts to strengthen our strong defense posture against North Korea. This includes supporting our current efforts to increase the number of ground-based interceptors in California and Alaska, enhancing the Department's ability to highlight and disrupt the illicit proliferation networks that North Korea uses, and promoting cooperation with partners to interdict vessels and aircraft suspected of transporting items of proliferation concern.

What is your view regarding the timing of transfer of wartime operational control from the U.S. to the ROK?

At the 2013 U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting, then-Secretary of Defense Hagel and ROK Minister of Defense Han decided that in light of the evolving security environment in the region, we will implement the ROK-proposed, conditions-based approach to the transition of wartime OPCON. The ROK will take wartime OPCON when critical ROK and alliance military capabilities are secured and the security environment in the region is conducive to a stable wartime OPCON transition.

China Assertiveness

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

China's actions are adding tension to the Asia-Pacific region, and subtly undermine the regional order that has sustained 70 years of security and prosperity in the Asia Pacific. For example, its claims to nearly the entire South China Sea are inconsistent with international law. The international community continues to call on China to settle such issues cooperatively and without coercion. China has responded with aggressive land reclamation efforts on a pace and scale far surpassing other claimants that will allow it to position military forces astride vital international sea lanes.

Through a persistent military and law enforcement presence and the announcement in November 2013 of a new Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea, China continues to engage in actions that appear designed to challenge Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands.

China Mil-Mil

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

Regarding our military-to-military (mil-mil) relations with China, it is profoundly in our shared interests that we find ways to increase cooperation where our interests overlap and to manage our differences where we disagree. In recent years, the Department's sustained and substantive dialogue with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has enabled both the United States and China to reduce the risk of misperception and miscalculation, as well as to deepen practical cooperation in areas ranging from humanitarian assistance to military medicine. In addition to making investments that ensure our technological advantages in all domains, the military-to-military relationship is an important component in managing competition.

What is your view of the purpose and relative importance of sustained military-to-military relations with China?

At their most basic level, U.S.-China defense contacts and exchanges provide opportunities to establish and maintain open lines of communication that will be essential to managing a crisis or preventing unintended escalation. The military-to-military relationship also allows us to explore and expand cooperation in areas of mutual interest, as well as manage security competition and other frictions in the relationship in a way that supports overall stability. Our high-level leadership and policy interactions have allowed us to address with China at the strategic-level differences in areas such as nuclear and strategic stability, operations and standards in the space, cyber and maritime domains, and regional security issues such as Afghanistan, North Korea, South and East China Seas, and others.

Anti-Access/Area Denial

Over the past few years, much has been made of the emerging anti-access and area denial capabilities of certain countries and the prospect that these capabilities may in the future limit the U.S. military's freedom of movement and action in certain regions. Do you believe emerging anti-access and area denial capabilities are a concern?

Emerging anti-access and area denial capabilities (A2AD) are a concern. China is developing missiles and other military technologies that are intended to limit U.S. military's freedom of movement in the Western Pacific. Russia is developing its A2AD capabilities, including missiles, in order to constrain U.S. and Allied freedom of movement on its periphery. Iran maintains a layered A2AD capability through the employment of road mobile ballistic missiles, an integrated air defense system, anti-ship cruise missiles, and naval assets stationed in the Persian Gulf.

If so, what do you believe the U.S. armed forces need to be doing now and in the next few years to ensure continued access to all strategically important segments of the maritime domain?

As the President outlined in the 2015 National Security Strategy, the U.S. is committed to freedom of navigation and the safety and sustainability of maritime environment. The Department will therefore invest in critical personnel and technological advantages to meet the President's commitment, especially to counter anti-access and area denial capabilities of our potential enemies. Details of specific actions and investments are more appropriate for a classified discussion.

If confirmed, you would play an important role in the process of transforming the U.S. armed forces' capability and capacity to meet new and emerging threats.

Concerning capability and capacity to meet new and emerging threats, what are your goals regarding transformation of the U.S. military?

My goals would include addressing emerging threats through capability and capacity advancement across the spectrum of defense activities. The Department is exploring new "offset strategies"—combinations of technologies, operational concepts, and organizational constructs to meet these challenges which we can discuss in a classified setting. If confirmed, I will also emphasize the development of a new model for deterrence in the 21st Century to ensure that emerging domains—such as cyber—are incorporated into our thinking.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Capabilities

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

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

The Department has insufficient ISR assets to meet the global demand. Meeting new requests required reallocating assets from other Secretary of Defense-approved operations. The Department must therefore allocate ISR assets to meet our highest priorities. To support counter-terrorism operations, we have allocated 90% of our remotely-piloted full-motion video assets to USCENTCOM in support of our counter-terrorism operations, with the remaining sourced primarily to USAFRICOM. We are leveraging other assets with increased standoff ranges and enhanced defensive capabilities to support USEUCOM's indications and warning collection requirements and to support USPACOM's sensitive reconnaissance operations areas.

As our forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan, should existing ISR assets be re-postured to support combatant command needs in other regions, or can we afford to reduce ISR capacity?

To ensure a balance across operational, force management, and institutional risks, the Department continually evaluates our capabilities against evolving combatant command requirements. When appropriate, we can reposition ISR assets to support emerging needs across other regions. For example, within the last year, we sourced nearly all of our current ISR for Syria and Iraq from operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, we made the tough decision to return Air Force MQ-1 and MQ-9 capacity to a steady-state 60 flights a day, reducing risk to the long-term sustainability of the USAF's unmanned pilot force.

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

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

I believe we should invest in ISR platforms, sensors, and communications capabilities designed to penetrate and survive in high-threat and denied environments, across all domains. It is faulty to assume we will rapidly gain superiority in the air or other domains in future conflicts. We must find the right balance of ISR capabilities. Future scenarios will require assets capable of penetrating and surviving in high-threat and denied areas. While these capabilities are expensive to develop and field, they are a necessary component of balanced efforts to maintain our strategic advantage.

Aircraft Carrier-Launched Unmanned Systems

The Navy's current plan for the Unmanned Carrier-Launched Airborne Surveillance and Strike (UCLASS) system aircraft is to develop an airframe optimized for unrefueled endurance (~14 hours) and the ISR mission. Given the combat radius of the planned carrier air wing, are you concerned the carrier will lack the ability to project power at relevant distances given emerging anti-access/area-denial threats?

Yes. That is why it is important for the Department to continue development of concepts and capabilities that allow us to project power when faced with an A2AD environment to maintain competitive advantage.

Special Operations Forces

The 2006 and 2010 QDRs mandated significant growth in our special operations forces (SOF) and enablers that directly support their operations. The most-recent QDR released in 2014 capped this growth at 69,500, approximately 2,500 below the originally planned growth. In light of the growing global terrorism threat, do you believe the currently planned end-strength for SOF is sufficient to meet global requirements?

Any changes to end-strength, whether conventional or special operations forces (SOF), require continual analysis to meet current and predicted threats while informed by fiscal realities.

SOF are heavily reliant on enabling support from the general purpose force. In light of current fiscal challenges, do you believe sufficient enabling capabilities can be maintained within the general purpose forces and that such capabilities will remain available to special operations forces?

I firmly believe that we have trained general purpose forces for these missions and we will continue to have this capability going forward.

International Peacekeeping Contributions

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

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

The Department should focus its contributions to the UN in areas that will help make systemic changes to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of UN peacekeeping operations. Select placements of personnel to key positions within the UN can help facilitate this objective.

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

Over the past year we have provided multiple officers to the UN to include the head of the UN’s military planning service. The recent administrative waiver extension provided by the UN to the U.S. facilitates future assignments. If confirmed, I will explore methods to be more responsive to requests for personnel support to multilateral institutions.

Interagency Collaboration

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

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

The military element of national power will always be critical, but achieving lasting national security objectives requires an integrated whole of government approach. We have learned a great deal about this over the past decade and our capabilities for interagency collaboration have progressed substantially. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we do not lose that ability as we refocus on full spectrum proficiency.

How do you believe these efforts can be improved?

If confirmed, my focus must remain on the military instrument of power but I will ensure the Joint Staff remains collaborative and engaged with the interagency and private sector. I want to maximize interagency partners' integration into our training and education programs, in order to strengthen the relationships that are essential when facing a national security challenge.

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

Joint Doctrine must adapt quickly to innovation in the dynamic environment of current operations. In turn, we must infuse doctrine quickly into the education and joint exercise programs. We have made great strides in this over the last decade. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department's Joint Force Development process analyzes lessons learned from operational practice, joint training and concept development and moves them rapidly into Joint Doctrine for the operational preparation and future employment of the force.

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

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

Our performance in crisis situations rests on how well we collaborate on a routine basis. Therefore, I support a whole-of-government planning, operations and resourcing framework to ensure our country plans are mutually-reinforcing. The military develops Theater Campaign Plans and Functional Campaign Plans that address regional and trans-regional issues. We seek input from interagency partners in the development of these plans to de-conflict and complement efforts. State is beginning to develop Joint Regional Strategies to address regional foreign policy priorities and drive country strategies. This new regional perspective will improve our ability to coordinate The Department's plans with State's plans.

Responsibility to Protect

The U.S. Government has recognized the "responsibility to protect" (R2P) – that is, the responsibility of the international community to use appropriate means to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, by encouraging states to protect their own populations, by helping states build the capacity to do so, and by acting directly should national authorities fail to provide such protection. In

its 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Department of Defense names “preventing human suffering due to mass atrocities” as one of a long list of potential contingencies that DOD might be called on to address. DOD has begun to explore some of the implications of R2P, by considering “mass atrocity prevention and response operations” (MAPRO).

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

The United States does not currently view the “responsibility to protect” as a legal basis for the use of military force. Without legal standing, it is not a practice to rank order by priority. However, the Department undertook an active role and remains prepared to act, if directed, to help prevent and respond to mass atrocity situations.

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

The use of military force is only one instrument of national power. The role of the Department is to support our government’s decided response in any situation as part of a whole-of-government approach. The Department should provide options and provide the risk assessment of those options for our political leaders’ use in their decision making.

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

It would be a political vice military decision to use R2P as a basis for intervention. However, the U.S. Government continues working with its allies, partners, and with the Syrian opposition to provide humanitarian assistance within Syria and across the region. The United States already has provided over \$4.4 billion in aid since FY12 to help the victims of the conflict, including emergency medical care and supplies, food, and shelter. The U.S. Government has spent over three quarters of a billion dollars in FY15.

Operation Observant Compass & the Lord’s Resistance Army

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

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

It is my understanding that Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS has four main objectives:

- 1) Increase protection of civilians affected by the LRA
- 2) Promote defection, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of LRA fighters
- 3) Remove Joseph Kony and LRA leaders from central Africa
- 4) Increase humanitarian access and provide relief

With U.S. government assistance, our African partners are making considerable progress achieving these mission objectives.

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

If confirmed, I will advocate for the Department to continue resourcing this operation at a level appropriate to the threat the LRA poses to our national interests in the region.

National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime

Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing. The Director of National Intelligence recently described transnational organized crime as “an abiding threat to U.S. economic and national security interests,” and stated that “rising drug violence and corruption are undermining stability and the rule of law in some countries” in the Western Hemisphere. In July 2011, the President released his Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. One of the priority action areas designated in the strategy is “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement.”

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

The President's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime integrates all elements of our national power to combat transnational organized crime and related threats to national security – and urges our partners to do the same. Ultimately, the strategy seeks to reduce transnational organized crime from a national security threat to a manageable public safety concern in the U.S. and in strategic regions abroad.

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

The Department of Defense provides a valuable supporting role to other U.S. government agencies with the lead to combat transnational organized crime.

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

The Department provides unique capabilities to address the national security threat of transnational criminal organizations by supporting U.S. law enforcement and the Intelligence Community as part of a whole of government approach, consistent with current and recently expanded authorities provided in the FY15 NDAA. Intelligence support, counter-threat finance support, building partner capacity and detection and monitoring are specific Department capabilities which support the interagency and partner nations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The situation in Syria is truly tragic considering the estimates of over two hundred thousand combatant and non-combatants deaths, with over four million displaced. There is no military solution in Syria when the violence occurs due to a brutal regime that attacks its own citizens. There can be no peace in Syria with Assad in power, only a negotiated political settlement will solve Syrian crisis.

Counter Threat Finance

DOD and the Intelligence Community (IC) have begun investing more resources in identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with terrorist networks and illicit trafficking, but the opportunities for tracking and degrading illicit financing flows are not yet matched by the effort and resources devoted to them. Identifying and disrupting key individuals, entities, and facilitation routes enabling the flow of money that supports terrorism, production of IEDs, narco-trafficking, proliferation, and other significant national security threats could have an outsized impact on confronting these threats.

What are your views on the role of DOD in counter threat finance activities?

The Department's policy is to work with other U.S. government entities and partner nations to effectively deny, disrupt, degrade, and defeat our adversaries' ability to access and utilize financial resources. If confirmed, I will work to further integrate our efforts with those of the interagency, intelligence community, and our foreign and institutional partners to more effectively counter threat finance activities and networks.

Are you aware of any policy, legal authority, or resource shortfalls that may impair U.S. counter threat finance efforts?

Lack of sufficient insight and fidelity on the sources of corruption in partner nations can hinder our ability to achieve counter threat network goals. Additionally, in non-terrorism cases, there are still difficulties sharing timely and relevant information between law enforcement and intelligence elements.

In your view, how should the Department of Defense coordinate and interface with other key agencies, including the Department of Treasury and the Intelligence Community, in conducting counter threat finance activities?

The Department should, and currently does, augment and support the efforts of other U.S. government entities, including the Department of Treasury and the Intelligence Community, with its unique capabilities to conduct counter threat finance capabilities. The result is a well-coordinated, capable, and robust counter threat finance posture. If confirmed, I will continue to remain fully engaged in the interagency process to diminish adversary use of both licit and illicit financial networks.

Section 1208 Operations

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

What is your assessment of this authority?

Section 1208 funding is a good tool enabling the U.S. Government to leverage our foreign partners and reduces U.S. unilateral Direct Action operations to combat terrorism. 1208 funding allows the U.S. to quickly advance counterterrorism objectives in areas that would otherwise allow terrorism to go unchecked. The U.S. can build on programs to transition into building partner capacity so that foreign partners can deny terrorists a safe haven within their sovereign country.

Active-Duty and Reserve Component End Strength

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

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

As the total force draws down, the role of the Reserve Component will continue to be critical in meeting the requirements of our National Military Strategy. Because much of the Total Force's essential capabilities reside in the National Guard and Reserves, we simply cannot meet our global commitments without them. However, I cannot stress enough that we need both statutory authorities and a reliable funding stream to maintain the readiness of our active duty component and assured access to our trained and ready reserve components. Without assured access, we cannot adequately program and properly plan for integrating and employing this critical asset in support of our national interests.

What additional military personnel reductions do you envision if the sequester continues?

The PB16 FYDP manning levels reflect the maximum acceptable risk in executing our defense strategy. If sequestration continues, we will further reduce total personnel end-strength consistent with the 2013 Strategic Choices Management Review and subsequent SASC testimony by the Service Chiefs.

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

I believe the Department and Services' force management tools are flexible enough to draw down to authorized Service end strengths. I know of no request for increased tools or authorities at this time.

Religious Guidelines

American military personnel routinely deploy to locations around the world where they must engage effectively with allies and with host-country nationals whose faiths and beliefs may be different than their own. For many other cultures, religious faith is not a purely personal and private matter; it is the foundation of their culture and society. Learning to respect the different faiths and beliefs of others, and to understand how accommodating different views can contribute to a diverse force is, some would argue, an essential skill for operational effectiveness.

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

Yes. The Department of Defense is committed to accommodating the free exercise of religion and other beliefs without impinging on those who have different beliefs or no religious belief.

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

Yes. Law and policy accommodate individual expressions of belief as long as they do not impact mission accomplishment, good order and discipline, and unit cohesion.

In your view, does a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussions about personal religious faith and beliefs in a garrison environment contribute in a positive way to preparing U.S. forces to be effective in overseas assignments? Would a policy that discourages open discussions about personal faith and beliefs be more or less effective at preparing service members to work and operate in a pluralistic environment?

In my view, it is important to have a military climate that welcomes and respects open and candid discussion about personal religious faith. Expressing personal belief in a manner that is respectful of other's views helps strengthen cohesion within a unit. At the same time, it helps U.S. forces to develop a deeper awareness and understanding of other perspectives, which is important in overseas assignments. Policies that discourage open discussion would be short-sighted in their understanding of the world in which we live.

Prevention of and Response to Sexual Assaults

In 2014, there was what the Department described as an “unprecedented 53% increase in victim reports of sexual assault. In fiscal year 2014, victims made 4,660 Unrestricted Reports and 1,840 initial Restricted Reports of sexual assault. Also in fiscal year 2014, the Department saw the number of victims who converted Restricted Reports to Unrestricted Reports increase from an average of 15% to 20%. According to the 2014 RAND Military Workplace Study approximately 72% of service member victims who indicated they made a sexual assault report said they would make the same decision to make a report if they had to do it over again. The Rand Study also indicated the percentages of active duty personnel who experienced unwanted sexual assault declined in 2014, from 6.1% to 4.3% for women and from 1.2% to 0.9% for men. The Department also concluded the estimated gap between reporting and prevalence of sexual assaults was at the narrowest point since the Department began tracking this data.

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

We have taken strong action to address the climate within the military and to bring perpetrators to justice. We hold commanders accountable for both. We have made progress but must continue to work hard, particularly in reforms designed to improve victim confidence, enhance access to victim advocacy and legal support. The Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs are committed to the safety of our men and women and will not relax our comprehensive efforts to combat sexual assault.

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

The unrestricted and restricted reporting options were designed to assist victims. Because unrestricted reporting automatically initiates a criminal investigation, some victims were choosing to forego support services rather than initiate an investigation. The restricted reporting option allows a victim access to medical care and support services without initiating an investigation. Offering both forms of reporting provides a means to protect a victim's privacy and time to cope with the trauma of sexual assault.

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

The Department has provided close oversight and strong support to the Services. The collaboration between the OSD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office and Services led to many advancements, including the development of metrics which will not only improve oversight but will also help better understand the effectiveness of our response efforts.

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

The chain of command is fundamental of our military culture. Our ability to effect institutional change rest with leaders at all levels but starts with the commander. Commanders are accountable for what happens in their units and must foster a command climate of dignity, respect and trust where sexist behavior, sexual harassment and sexual assault is not condoned or ignored.

Surveys report that up to 62 percent of victims who report a sexual assault perceive professional or social retaliation for reporting. If confirmed, what will you do to address the issue of retaliation for reporting a sexual assault?

Any form of retaliation goes against our core values. The Department is focused on this issue and working to understand what causes this problem and develop solutions. If confirmed, I will work with the OSD and the Services to ensure our service members understand that our culture fosters dignity and respect and retaliation is not tolerated.

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

We must improve victim confidence in our ability to respond to incidents of sexual assault, and in their well-being after an incident. If confirmed, I will continue to work hard with OSD to assess current programs and best practices that build victim confidence in our systems and our ability to hold perpetrators appropriately accountable.

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

I value the legal analyses and recommendations of our military judge advocates. However, I firmly believe the military commander's role is indispensable in the military justice process. The Uniform Code of Military Justice a criminal justice system, but it is also a critical aspect of a commander's authority to maintain good order and discipline. I believe our service members and our national security are best served by retaining the military commander's key role in the military justice decision process.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

The Department, in January 2014 rescinded the policy restricting the assignment of women to certain units which have the primary mission of engaging in direct ground combat operations, and has given the military services until January 1, 2016, to open all positions currently closed to women, or to request an exception to policy to keep a position closed beyond that date, an exception that must be approved by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. The services are working now to develop gender-free physical and mental standards for all military occupations, presumably with the goal of allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to serve in those positions if they can meet those standards.

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

The Services are in the final stages of validating their standards. Military Department Secretaries must certify that their standards are gender-neutral and in compliance with all applicable laws by 30 Sept. If confirmed, I look forward to working with OSD and the Joint Chiefs to monitor the effectiveness of the standards.

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

Yes. Our success is contingent upon establishing a ready and capable military force. Our standards must prepare us to meet any contingency.

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

All decisions impacting our armed forces should be based on a complete analysis of mission requirements.

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

If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure decisions are made that reflect joint operations requirements.

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

I believe our final standards, along with sound leadership, will address any concerns .

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

I do not believe this will be a problem that will impact implementation.

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

If confirmed, I will take every opportunity to ensure our military family members concerns are addressed.

Military Health Care Reform and Modernization

Congress authorized the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 to conduct a review of the military compensation and retirement systems and to make recommendations to modernize those systems. The Commission released its report in January 2015. What is your view of the Commission's findings regarding the military health system?

I agree with the Commission that the military must continue to improve the military health care system. The health care reforms proposed in the President's FY16 budget are a good first step and offer service members, retirees, and their families more control and choice over their health care decisions. As we prepare the FY17 budget, we will work with Congress to determine if additional reform proposals are needed.

Do you believe the Department's FY16 proposal to consolidate TRICARE adequately addressed the Commission's findings on military health care?

Yes. The Department's FY16 proposal to consolidate TRICARE effectively provides family members and retirees with greater choice and control over their healthcare decision without the

risk of an untested, and potentially infeasible, overhaul of the Military Health System. If confirmed, I will work closely with Department leadership and Congress to ensure the proposal is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.

What is your view of the Commission's recommendation to establish a Joint Readiness Command?

A new, four-star readiness command is not necessary as the Department has sufficient existing processes and governance structures to identify, track, and measure the readiness status of Department-wide and Service-specific essential medical capabilities.

What is your assessment of progress the Defense Health Agency has made to create efficiencies and generate cost savings by combining the medical support functions of the Services?

I have been briefed that the Defense Health Agency (DHA) is on track to reach Full Operational Capability on 1 October 2015. In order for the DHA to be successful, the difference between policy and execution must be clear to the Services, Combatant Commands, and Joint Staff. This clarification and along with the DHA's ability to meet its assigned mission essential tasks will be validated by the Joint Staff NLT 2017 when a Combat Support Agency Review Team Assessment (CSART) is conducted by the Joint Staff.

Do you believe the Defense Health Agency should be replaced with a new combatant command, a Unified Medical Command?

No. The Defense Health Agency (DHA) will reach Full Operating Capability (FOC) on 01 October 2015 and it is premature to make a determination if the DHA will meet mission demands. As such, I agree with the Secretary Carter's assessment that an additional four-star command for the purpose of ensuring joint medical readiness is not required now.

Wounded Warrior Support

Service members wounded and injured in combat operations deserve the highest priority from their Service for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty when appropriate, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge.

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

The establishment of the Warrior Care Policy (WCP) Office is probably one of the most significant improvements we've made in support of our wounded, ill, and injured Recovering Service Members (RSMs). The WCP is solely focused on developing policies for the DoD and provides oversight to ensure proper execution and outcomes.

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

Although the Services and Department have made strides in caring for many different aspects/needs of wounded, ill, and injured Recovering Service Members (RSMs), more can be done with regards to standardizing policy across the Services (related to retention). There needs to be more clarity or communication of the procedures and processes which each Service has when a Service member desires to return to active duty.

What is your assessment of the need to make further improvements in the Integrated Disability Evaluation System?

My understanding is the Department makes every effort to improve our key processes and IDES is one of those areas. In the last few years, DoD has identified and executed numerous improvements that have resulted in achieving higher service member satisfaction as well as more timely processing. As a result, as of May 2015, Active Component case timeliness averaged 223 days with a goal set at 290 days. The Reserve Component has achieved a 298 days metric while the goal is 305 days. Service member satisfaction is at a new high of 87%. I believe we are moving in the right direction and if confirmed will continue to make improving this process a priority.

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources

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

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

Preventing suicide among members of the Armed Services is one of the most important challenges we share with the Services. We have joined forces with agencies throughout DoD and civil society to better understand the factors leading to suicide. We are shaping policy to foster a culture of Total Force Fitness that enhances wellness, promotes resilience, and sustains a military force fit in mind, body, and spirit. In addition to educating the force on suicide prevention, we are providing additional training and support to our first responders (chaplains, senior enlisted leaders, legal counsel, and mental health providers) to ensure that they are as equipped as possible to prevent suicides.

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

I believe we reduce the stigma associated with service members seeking mental health care. I also believe that prevention by early intervention for both service members and their family is a key component of mental health care. Additionally, having adequate care providers at the

appropriate locations for service members to seek out support is critical. Specifically, I continue to support embedding mental health personnel across the deployed force and the requirement of an in-theater periodic mental health assessment for all service members deployed. The long-term mental health of our service members and their families cannot be understated and if confirmed I will continue making progress in supporting them in this area.

Military Quality of Life

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

If confirmed, what further enhancements, if any, to military quality of life programs would you consider a priority in an era of intense downward pressure on budgets?

One of the chief priorities within military quality of life that I would like to see pursued, is a greater focus on program evaluation and outcomes. The Military Family Readiness Counsel was established in 2008 specifically to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the quality of life and family readiness programs, and the Joint Staff participates in this venue. We need to see more concrete recommendations from this body to the Secretary of Defense on how utilize evidence to improve our social support programs, especially in light of downward pressure on budgets.

Family Readiness and Support

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

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

I consider pay, benefits and retirement on of the top issues for service members and their families. This has been an intense area of examination and discussion within the recent Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) efforts and among the Services. A family's finances have a direct impact on the stress level and readiness of the service member and their families. Changes are coming with the introduction of the new blended retirement package. We need a plan to communicate the value of this new retirement system and educate our members on the financial decisions they must make as the changes are implemented.

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

I understand that the Services have already made plans to adjust for force size and rotation, and family readiness is a responsibility of each Service; however, we can encourage more collaboration with community-based organizations to maximize non-DoD resources. Family support programs that are flexible, responsive, and communicate / coordinate with interagency and non-governmental family services will be critical in meeting the needs of our service members and their families. The Department can find efficiencies within its own programs through better evaluation practices, and we can also enhance the accessibility to DoD and Non-DoD support programs.

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

Over the past fourteen years of war, one of the best support programs developed for the reserve component (RC) families has been the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP). The YRRP continues to evolve and change with the deployment operational tempo and fiscal constraints, but if confirmed I am committed to ensuring that its essential services receives proper funding to meet the unique needs of our RC community.

Operational Energy Budgeting

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

Our ability to project and sustain power depends on the assured delivery of energy. Through the Joint Staff's and Combatant Commands' operational experience, campaign analyses, and wargames, we have demonstrated the tradeoffs and risks that accompany our need for large amounts of energy. To increase warfighting effectiveness, we will continue to analyze and improve the broad energy enterprise through overarching policy and strategy, global posture, acquisition management, and force development.

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

We must continue to take a balanced approach to improve our warfighting capabilities from an operational energy perspective while reducing risk and cost. Energy enables operational capability with improved range, endurance, and force reliability, therefore we should make additional investments to improve the energy performance of our weapon systems, equipment, and their modifications; our enduring and non-enduring installations; by reducing energy supply-chain vulnerabilities; and by increasing energy security through diversification.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Officials of the Department of Defense, including previous Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have advocated for accession to the Law of the Sea Convention.

Do you support United States accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea?

Yes. The United States is a maritime nation and joining the Convention will enhance our capability and credibility in ensuring freedom of the seas for both military and economic activities on, under and above the world's oceans. The Convention's various navigational and overflight provisions provide global mobility for our Armed Forces.

How would you respond to critics of the Convention who assert that accession is not in the national security interests of the United States?

Our non-party status diminishes our influence in defending the Convention's existing norms that enable the access, mobility, and sustainment of our military forces and commercial fleet. I also detracts from our ability to lead developments in the maritime domain, and enables emerging powers to advance their contrary interpretations of the Convention. As the global security environment changes, it will become increasingly important for the United States, as the world's foremost maritime power, to use all elements of national power and lead from inside the framework of the Convention rather than observe from the outside.

In your view, what impact, if any, would U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention have on ongoing and emerging maritime disputes such as in the South China Sea and in the Arctic?

Accession would improve our ability to shape the outcome of ongoing and emerging maritime disputes. Our position to influence these key interests is diminished when we seek to enforce the Convention's navigation and over flight rights guaranteed to all nations when we are one of a very small group of nations that is not a party. In the Arctic, we are the only Arctic nation that is not a party to the Convention. As a non-party to the Convention, the United States cannot utilize the Convention's mechanisms to gain international recognition of its ECS.

Detainee Treatment Policy

Recent Department of Defense operations in Iraq and Syria highlight the need for a continued detention capability for both interrogation and law of war detention.

What recommendations do you have for ensuring that the Department of Defense maintains sufficient detention capabilities for capture operations against ISIL and other affiliated terrorist groups to remain a viable option?

I believe that the Department will continue to require a detention capability. If confirmed, I will advocate to civilian and military leadership to provide commanders on the ground the ability to lawfully detain as part of future capture operations.

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

Yes.

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014?

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

Offset Technologies

During the Cold War, the DOD pursued three key technologies to offset the numerical superiority of Soviet conventional forces: precision guided munitions, stealth technology, and satellite-based navigation. These three technologies have given U.S. forces unparalleled superiority until now. However, with advancements by our emerging adversaries, it seems like the military technological superiority is beginning to erode. As a result, it is critical that the United States once again focus on offsetting the technology advantages being gained by our adversaries. Which technology priorities do you believe the Department of Defense should be pursuing to maintain the military technological superiority of the United States?

As anti-access and area-denial weapons and other advanced technologies proliferate, the Department will likely turn to breakthrough technologies in the fields of robotics, autonomous systems, miniaturization, big data, and additive manufacturing to restore our military advantage.

What strategies would you recommend that Secretary Carter implement to develop these technology priorities?

The purpose of the Defense Innovation Initiative strategy laid out by Secretary Carter is to develop our future technology priorities. Complimenting this effort by the warfighters is the development of new innovative operational concepts. If confirmed, I will make sure that the investments in operation concepts and human capital—as our greatest asset will always be our service members—proceed apace with our efforts to pursue innovative solutions through technological means.

What role do the services have to play in their development?

By identifying, experimenting, and wargaming combinations of new and existing technologies necessary to project power globally, the Services in partnership with the Defense Innovation Initiative team will help steer the development of future technology priorities.

Science and Technology

One of the main objectives of the defense research enterprise is to develop advanced technologies that will be of benefit to the warfighter. In this regard, it is critical that advancements quickly transition from the development phase into testing and evaluation and ultimately into a procurement program for the warfighter. What are some of the challenges you see in transitioning technologies effectively from research programs into programs of records?

Moving an advanced technology from a research program into a program of record requires carving out room in the budget based upon a compelling need. Once in the budget, maintaining momentum with a particular technology is challenging as it must continue to compete against other "good ideas" year after year in our resourcing process. The final challenge, ensuring an advanced technology meets its promise in a timely and cost-effective manner as we transition the technology into a warfighting capability.

As the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what steps will you take to ensure that the services are benefitting more quickly and directly from the research being performed by the defense research enterprise?

In my roles as a Defense Innovation Initiative “core group” member and Chairman of the JROC, I will ensure that the resourcing and acquisition processes are well-informed on the priority and timing of capability needs. In collaboration with the Chairman, I will also continue to use the Chairman’s Gap Assessment and the Chairman’s Program Recommendation to communicate directly to Secretary Carter my thoughts on promising research performed by the research enterprise.

Do you feel that defense technologies and systems, especially in areas such as mobile communications, computing, and robotics, are keeping pace with global and commercial

technological advances? If not, what do you suggest that the Department do to keep up with the pace of global technological change?

Keeping pace with global and commercial technology is challenging the Department. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary's Defense Innovation Initiative to focus the Department on maintaining our military's technological edge in an increasingly competitive technology environment.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.