

**Advance Policy Questions for David Joel Trachtenberg**  
**Nominee for Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy**

**Department of Defense Reforms**

**The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included the most sweeping reforms since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.**

**Do you support these reforms?**

The reforms included in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2017 deserve careful attention. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Department personnel and the defense committees to understand their impact and how best to implement them for the future of the Department.

**What other areas for defense reform do you believe might be appropriate for this Committee to address?**

I support continued dialogue with the Committee to improve the Department's organization and processes to address the challenges of today's security environment. Our current security environment involves rapidly emerging technologies and threats that require the Department and Joint Force to be more flexible and responsive. If confirmed, I will look carefully at the Department's efforts, and will advise the Committee of any further appropriate reforms.

**Duties**

**Pursuant to sections 134 and 137a of title 10, United States Code, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy exercises full power and authority to act for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and exercises the powers of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on any and all matters on which the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is authorized to act pursuant to title 10, United States Code, and DOD Directive 5111.1, except in those areas where delegation of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy authority is otherwise restricted by higher authority or prohibited by law.**

**What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?**

My responsibilities as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (PDUSD) is outlined by DoD Directive 5111.03. My role is as the principal assistant to and under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. As such the PDUSD helps the Under Secretary carry out their responsibilities, functions, and authorities. Moreover, the PDUSD advises and assists the Under Secretary in providing advice and assistance to the Secretary of Defense.

**If confirmed, what duties and functions do you expect that the Secretary of Defense**

**and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy would prescribe for you?**

If confirmed, I expect that my duties and functions would include advising and assisting the USD(P) and the Secretary of Defense on strategy formulation, contingency planning, and the integration of Department of Defense plans and policy. I expect that this would include involvement in the planning, programming, budgeting and execution (PPBE) system, and in major departmental reviews such as the Nuclear Posture Review and the Ballistic Missile Review. I look forward to speaking with the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy further about how I could best support their efforts.

**Torture and Enhanced Interrogation Techniques**

**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, and required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?**

Yes.

**U.S. Strategic Vital Interests**

**It is important to delineate between the United States' strategic vital interests and other interests. Strategic vital interests must represent those for which the United States is willing to commit the nation's blood and treasure.**

**What and where are the United States' strategic vital interests?**

In my view, protecting the U.S. homeland, U.S. citizens, and our allies and interests abroad remains a paramount, strategic vital interest. I understand that the forthcoming National Security Strategy will further articulate our vital national interests.

**How do these overlay with extant and emerging threats around the globe?**

Today's threat environment presents challenges to U.S. interests around the globe, since the current international security environment includes challenges that can cross regions, can include multiple domains (i.e., land, sea, air, space, cyber), and can involve multiple types of capabilities.

**National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy**

**What is your understanding of the Trump Administration's global vision for the United States and its role in shaping the global security environment?**

In my view, the Trump Administration seeks to protect vital U.S. interests, and to shape the security environment constructively in a manner that provides for the continued security and prosperity of the United States. I understand that the National Security Strategy will articulate the Administration's vision for the United States and its role in shaping the security environment. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee on the implications of this vision for the Department of Defense.

**In your view, what should the envisioned end states entail for the new National Security and National Defense Strategies?**

I believe these strategy documents should focus on ensuring the continued protection of vital U.S. interests, such as the protection of the U.S. homeland, U.S. citizens, and our interests abroad. The National Defense Strategy would look to identify how the military instrument of power, in concert with a whole-of-government approach and our global network of allies and partners, can positively influence the global security environment.

**What are the objectives and key attributes of the National Defense Strategy?**

I understand that the Department is currently updating the National Defense Strategy, which should be complete by the fall. I understand that this review will assess the global environment, define a strategic framework to address identified threats and opportunities, revise force sizing and shaping criteria, analyze force employment approaches, and review force structure requirements. If confirmed, I expect to be an active participant in this review.

**What are the key elements of strategic deterrence in the 21st century?**

The central element of strategic deterrence is the ability to convince potential adversaries that an attack on the United States or its allies would result in costs that far outweigh any benefits they might expect to achieve through such an attack. It requires that we maintain the ability to deny benefits from attacks on the United States or our allies and to impose costs in response that adversaries would consider unacceptable. It is also essential that adversaries recognize that U.S. capabilities, and the resolve to use these capabilities, are both credible. In the 21st century, our deterrence strategy and posture must address strategic threats from an increased number of actors with a range of perceptions and values.

**What are the core elements of a comprehensive global defense strategy to: defeat ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other purveyors of violent extremism; stabilize Afghanistan; limit Iran's malign influence and other activities; contain North Korea; and deter war with Russia and China?**

I believe a cogent articulation of the problem and a clear understanding of the environment are important prerequisites to address the most pressing challenges that face the United States. I also believe that a comprehensive strategy for addressing these issues requires a whole-of-government approach that relies on the prudent application of both hard and soft power. If confirmed, I will work with counterparts in the Department as well as interagency colleagues to develop effective options to protect vital interests today, while building sufficient flexibility to address future threats.

## U.S. Military Force Sufficiency

**The United States will likely never afford the resources to assign all the forces each combatant commander believes they need, which leads the Department of Defense to apportion forces in operations planning. As U.S. military forces are already severely challenged in terms of capacity, in certain scenarios these forces may only exist on paper when it becomes necessary to allocate them for a given contingency.**

**How important are the U.S. military's global power projection capabilities in ensuring we remain a global power?**

The ability to project power worldwide is critical to U.S. national security and our role as a global power. Potential adversaries are investing in advanced capabilities to counter third party—including U.S.—regional access during a crisis or conflict. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we bolster power projection capabilities in order to protect our national interests, reassure allies and partners, and uphold a rules-based international order that underwrites global security.

**Do you believe the United States must retain the capability to strike any global target (hold any target at risk), both in the nuclear and conventional sense?**

I believe the United States should maintain effective and credible military capabilities, including both conventional and nuclear, that provide the ability to hold at risk the military objectives our potential adversaries value and that would be central to any coercive or aggressive design that they might pursue.

**In your opinion, does power projection include our ability to deploy and sustain forces anywhere on the planet, across the full range of military operations? Do you believe this is a unique characteristic of the American way of war?**

Yes. The United States plays a unique role in the world as a guarantor of security in key regions and as an ally and partner to many nations. We do so to protect our national interests. Our ability to respond to contingencies across the conflict spectrum by projecting power is essential in enabling our military to support this strategic approach.

**Do you believe we must also have a sufficient strategic and operational reserve, national mobilization capability, and robust defense industrial base to provide a second echelon of follow-on forces if a contingency arises in a particular region, especially against a near peer, great power state?**

Yes. In order to deter major conflicts, including with near-peer adversaries, the Department of Defense must maintain sufficient capacity in the total force to defeat aggression in more than one theater. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to examine investments in advanced capabilities and maintain a high state of readiness to prevail in a broad range of contingencies. To hedge against strategic surprise, this includes ensuring the Joint Force has capable reserves, a

robust and adaptive industrial base, and the ability to mobilize national resources when necessary.

**In light of current and future threats to the United States' strategic vital interests, do you believe the U.S. military must have the capacity to fight two wars simultaneously?**

The evolution of threats and years of underfunding have seriously impacted readiness and stretched the capacity and capability of the Joint Force to the point where our options may be constrained if we are challenged by contingencies in multiple theaters simultaneously. We cannot expect our adversaries to limit their challenges to only those areas where U.S. forces are best postured to confront them. I believe restoring a more robust military posture, as the President has called for, will help provide additional flexibility to address contingencies that affect U.S. strategic vital interests. I expect this issue to be addressed in the National Defense Strategy and, if confirmed, I expect to actively participate in this process.

**If you ascribe to these attributes as required of the U.S. military, in your opinion does the Fiscal Year 2017 Request for Additional Appropriations, and the Fiscal Year 2018 defense budget request previewed in the President's Budget Blueprint, sufficiently support the attainment of these attributes?**

Both the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2017 and the Fiscal Year 2018 defense budget are essential first steps in strengthening the U.S. Armed Forces, as called for by the President. They directly support the Secretary of Defense's goals of restoring readiness and developing a larger, more capable, and more lethal Joint Force, including through investment in critical power projection capabilities. But the defense budget remains at near historic lows as a percentage of GDP. After years of force reductions and budget cuts, additional investments are still needed in both the capacity and capability of the future force. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the committee and the Congress to continue the process of ensuring our military forces are appropriately resourced for the missions they are given.

### **Cyber Policy and Authorities**

**What should be the key elements of our national cyber policy?**

We need to develop a clear whole-of-government policy that addresses our responses to aggressive cyber activities and that strengthens and provides resiliency for our information networks and critical infrastructure. Also needed is a strategic approach for the government to recruit and retain the sort of personnel we need to meet the highly technical challenges posed by this domain. The Department of Defense (DoD) must continue to focus on developing capabilities needed to accomplish the Department's missions in and through cyberspace, including defending DoD networks, systems, and information, defending the Nation against attacks of significant consequences, and providing military options to the President.

**In your view, what cyber actions by an adversary would constitute an act of war?**

My understanding is that such a determination would be made by the President on a case-by-case basis. However, malicious cyber activity need not be considered an “act of war” to merit a response. If confirmed, I am committed to working with other elements of the government to develop a reinvigorated national strategy for responding to challenges in the cyber domain.

**How would you recommend structuring cyber execution authorities?**

The right alignment of roles, responsibilities, authorities, and accountability is critical to effective operations, particularly given the dynamic nature of activities in cyberspace. If confirmed, I would prioritize reviewing the alignment of these roles, responsibilities, and authorities to ensure that the Department can respond effectively to threats in cyberspace.

**Do you foresee delegation of cyber execution authority down to tactical levels such as with the application of conventional force, or do you envision more centralized control of execution authorities at the Commander-in-Chief level, such as with nuclear weapons?**

As a military operational domain, there can be cyberspace operations and effects at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Accordingly, the Department needs a tailored approach to the alignment of authorities and accountability rather than a one-size-fits all approach for cyberspace.

**In your view, what is the appropriate role for the Department of Defense in protecting our national critical information infrastructure and defending against cyber-attacks?**

The role of the Department of Defense is to defend the United States, its people, and its interests. Critical infrastructure must be defended, and any aggressor should know that we will respond strongly to attacks on such infrastructure. DoD works closely with the Department of Homeland Security, which plays the lead role in protecting, mitigating, and recovering from domestic cyber incidents, and with the Department of Justice, which plays the lead role in investigating, attributing, disrupting, and prosecuting cybercrimes.

The Department has a variety of capabilities that can be used to defend the Nation in cyberspace, and, if confirmed, I would prioritize the readiness of those capabilities. I would also engage the Intelligence Community, the Department of Homeland Security, and other departments and agencies to ensure close cooperation and support as each carries out its respective responsibilities.

**Space**

**There is growing concern about the vulnerability of our nation’s space-based systems and its supporting architecture.**

**Do you share this concern and, if so, what policy elements would you recommend for addressing these vulnerabilities?**

Yes, I do. My understanding is that DoD space policy is currently under review, including how space is integrated into the plans of the Combatant Commands, and I would want to obtain a better understanding of these issues and existing vulnerabilities, if confirmed, before recommending a course of action.

**What do you perceive as the greatest threats to our national security space satellites?**

The threat to our satellite capabilities is real and growing. Both Russia and China have developed and tested a variety of anti-satellite weapons capable of destroying or disabling space systems, and many countries have capabilities to jam GPS and satellite communications. Space systems must also contend with the natural space environment of man-made debris and space weather as well. If confirmed, I would work to ensure our space systems meet mission assurance requirements commensurate with addressing these growing threats.

**Do you support the development of offensive space control capabilities to counter those threats?**

All nations have an interest in avoiding hostilities in space. All countries have the inherent right of self-defense, which applies both terrestrial and to space activities. I share the view stated by Secretary Mattis in his confirmation testimony, “Offensive space control capabilities should be considered to ensure survivable and resilient space operations necessary for the execution of war plans.”

**If confirmed, would you propose any changes to national security space policy, organization, and programs?**

I would review the issue in more detail if confirmed. But I believe that for national security space, as with any large organization, it’s important to have clear lines of authority and accountability for accomplishing missions. We must have unity of effort across National Security Space in order to meet our national security objectives.

**Strategy to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)**

**On January 28, 2017, National Security Presidential Memorandum-3 was issued that states: “It is the policy of the United States that ISIS be defeated” and directs the Administration “to develop a comprehensive plan to defeat ISIS” with the Secretary of Defense as the lead of the interagency effort.**

**What goals, objectives, and indicators of success would you recommend for the strategy to defeat ISIS?**

Success in defeating ISIS is when the threat the group poses has degraded to a point where it no longer constitutes a significant threat to the United States, U.S. forces, allies and strategic partners, or U.S. interests and when it can be addressed by partner nations and forces without

extensive assistance from the United States. If I am confirmed, I will examine the Department's goals, objectives, and indicators of success.

**What types of options should be considered to accelerate the defeat of ISIS?**

I understand that several changes to policy have already been made, including decisions to surround and annihilate ISIS fighters rather than expel them from captured territories and to delegate force level authority to the Secretary of Defense. I support these changes. If confirmed, I would work within DoD and across the U.S. Government as necessary to consider additional options to accelerate ISIS's defeat.

**In your opinion, what are the major lessons learned from the fight against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere over the last two-and-a-half years?**

The major lessons learned from the fight against ISIS over the past two and one-half years are that defeating ISIS requires a whole-of-government approach and cannot be achieved through military efforts alone, that our "by, with, and through" approach with local partners continues to be the correct approach, and that we must address ISIS globally.

**What non-military activities by the U.S. Government will be important for achieving a lasting defeat of ISIS?**

There are a number of non-military activities by the U.S. Government that are integral to achieving a lasting defeat of ISIS. The most pressing need is a sufficient stabilization effort to consolidate military gains in Syria and elsewhere. Although U.S. forces, our allies, and local partners are succeeding in retaking territory from ISIS in Iraq and Syria through military efforts, consolidating these gains requires non-military resources to help stabilize the areas to prevent ISIS's return and to achieve its lasting defeat.

In addition to stabilization efforts, public diplomacy, information operations, and cyber strategies must be employed to isolate and delegitimize ISIS and its ideology. We must also continue efforts to cut off or seize ISIS's financial support, including financial transfers, money laundering, oil revenue, and human trafficking.

**After Mosul and Raqqa are liberated from ISIS control, the next major military campaign will likely occur in the Euphrates river valley.**

**What is your understanding of the strategy to accomplish U.S. objectives in Iraq and Syria after Mosul and Raqqa are liberated from ISIS?**

I understand that the strategy is to continue to work by, with, and through local partners, and together with a global coalition of partners, to defeat ISIS. As to specific next steps, if confirmed, I will work to evaluate, tailor, and execute our strategy based on realities on the ground after the objectives of liberating Mosul and Raqqa are achieved.

**What steps should be taken to prepare for the next phase in the campaign after the liberation of Mosul and Raqqa?**



If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary to ensure that I understand his intent and desired way forward. I also support the view that the Department should seek to preserve the element of strategic surprise by not necessarily disclosing intended actions publicly prior to taking them.

**Should we seek a political solution for the Sunni Arab peoples living between Damascus and Baghdad?**

Addressing core grievances of Sunnis living in Iraq and Syria is integral to ensuring a lasting ISIS defeat. If confirmed, I will coordinate with the Department of State on a political solution that takes those grievances into account.

**Middle East**

**What are the greatest threats to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East and what policy objectives should we pursue to protect them?**

The primary threats to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East are: transnational terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Al Qaeda, and affiliates; and Iran and its destabilizing activities, including its support for the Assad regime, sponsorship of Hezbollah and other proxy forces, and its ballistic missile capability. To protect U.S. national security interests against those challenges, the United States should maintain a robust and agile force posture to respond to current crises and regional contingencies; and promote strong defense partnerships that build the capacity of partners to provide for their own security and to assume a greater share of regional security responsibilities in support of common interests with the United States.

**Syria**

**What are the key U.S. national security interests in Syria and how would you describe the strategy to secure them?**

The U.S. national security interests in Syria are to eliminate safe havens in Syria from which terrorist organizations can breed regional instability and threaten U.S. and our partner interests around the globe; to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and to deter and counter the nefarious activities of Iran and its proxies in Syria. The whole of government strategy that seeks to accomplish this is based on defeating ISIS by working “by, with, and through” local vetted partner forces and regional partner countries; and to support efforts to establish a lasting cessation of hostilities that ends civil war and creates the conditions for a stable and representative political process.

**How does the strategy address the residual threat from Al Qaeda in Syria and their associates?**

I believe that working “by, with, and through” local vetted forces and regional partner countries to eliminate safe havens in Syria where terrorist organizations can operate will also address this residual threat.

**How would the defeat of ISIS impact the civil war in Syria?**

Defeating ISIS will help to set the conditions for a political solution to the conflict in Syria but must be coupled with international pressure to bring all parties to the table to reach a negotiated political solution. Since the rise of ISIS is inherently a product of the Assad regime’s brutal repression of its own people, the defeat of ISIS alone will not bring an end to the civil war.

**Do you believe a political resolution to the civil war in Syria is necessary to address the underlying conditions that enable violent extremists like ISIS and Al Qaeda to take root?**

Yes, a political resolution is necessary to address the underlying conditions that enabled violent extremists in Syria to take root and to persist. Only a stable, inclusive government in Syria that can exert control over its territory will be able to secure these areas.

**What are the key strategic interests and objectives of the Russians in Syria and how successful have they been at accomplishing them?**

Moscow’s objectives are to prop up the Assad regime, re-assert its regional influence, establish a long-term military presence in Syria, and to fight violent extremists in Syria. Russia claims that its primary motivation in Syria is fighting terrorists; however its actions to date have not been focused on or particularly effective in this objective. Russia has also not demonstrated its ability to play a constructive role in finding a political resolution in Syria. Russia has achieved its near term objective of bolstering the strength of the Assad regime and increased its regional influence. It is unclear whether it will be successful in maintaining an effective long-term military presence in the region.

**Discussing the removal of Bashar al-Assad from power with reporters in March 2017, the U.S. Ambassador to the UN said: “Are we going to sit there and focus on getting him out? No....”**

**Has the previously stated goal of removing Bashar al-Assad from power in Syria changed, and if so, what is the new objective and what are the benefits to U.S. national security interests of changing it?**

The primary U.S. objective in Syria remains the defeat of ISIS. Additionally, as the U.S. strike in April demonstrates, the United States will not passively stand by while Assad blithely ignores international law and employs chemical weapons he had declared destroyed. I support a political resolution to the civil war, in which the Syrian people decide the future of their country and leadership themselves. I find it hard to imagine a political solution in Syria in which Assad continues in power.

**Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been adamant that the People’s**

**Protection Units (YPG) of the Syrian Kurds should not receive U.S. and coalition support in their efforts to liberate Raqqa.**

**If the United States chooses not to support the YPG in operations to liberate Raqqa, what alternative forces could be used and how would their use affect the timeline and logistical support of the operation?**

The President has authorized DoD to equip Kurdish elements of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) as necessary to ensure a clear victory over ISIS in Raqqa, Syria. The U.S. continues to prioritize support for Arab elements of the SDF who would continue their efforts to liberate Raqqa.

## **Iraq**

**What are the key U.S. national security interests in Iraq and how would you describe the strategy to secure them?**

Our national security interest in Iraq is to deal ISIS a lasting defeat and to help Iraq provide for its own security that allows for a stable and sustainable political environment that preserves an independent, sovereign Iraq for the Iraqi people. The United States and Coalition will continue to work by, with, and through the Government of Iraq to enable the Iraqi Security Forces to deliver a lasting defeat of ISIS in Iraq.

**Do you believe that an enduring U.S. military presence is needed in Iraq? If so, what should be the missions and size of the enduring U.S. military presence?**

The United States and Iraq are long-term partners in improving the Iraqi Security Forces and dealing ISIS a lasting defeat. Even after the liberation of Mosul, ISIS will still retain a presence in Tal Afar, western Ninewa, Hawijah, al-Qaim, and parts of the Euphrates River Valley. The United States and Coalition will continue to work by, with, and through the Government of Iraq to enable the Iraqi Security Forces. I believe some U.S. military presence will be needed in Iraq after the defeat of ISIS, but the size, scope, and timeline of that presence will need to be closely coordinated with the Government of Iraq and calibrated to support Iraqi Security Forces in defeating ISIS.

**How would you characterize Iran's influence in Iraq today and what is your recommended strategy to limit that influence in the future?**

Iran's sectarian approach to Iraq contributes to extremism and instability and reinforces ISIS's appeal among select Sunni Arab populations. Iran is using its long-standing political, cultural, and religious ties to deepen its involvement in the Iraqi state. The best strategy to limit Iranian influence is to work with the Government of Iraq to strengthen Iraq's security institutions and promote Iraqi national sovereignty.

## **Iran**

**What is your assessment of U.S. national security interests associated with the growth of Iranian influence in the Middle East?**

Iran is one of the main challenges in the Middle East and presents a threat to multiple U.S. national security interests in the region including threatening the free flow of commerce, aggravating of sectarian tensions, threatening our partners both directly and by proxy, and serving as a destabilizing force in multiple conflicts most notably in Syria and Yemen.

**How would you describe our strategy to counter Iran's malign influence and other activities throughout the Middle East, and more specifically, Iran's proxy networks?**

We must continue to employ a whole of government strategy to counter Iran's destabilizing activities and proxy networks by supporting our partners and allies, remaining postured to respond to Iranian aggression, and ensuring that the Department of Defense retains the ability to respond to any eventuality.

**The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) to limit the nuclear program of Iran was agreed in July 2015 and implemented in January 2016.**

**What is your assessment of the JCPOA?**

I did not support the JCPOA because of concerns that it allows Iran to retain elements useful for a nuclear weapons program and that Iran might seek ways to circumvent its restrictions and to use the sanctions relief obtained as a result of the agreement to covertly advance its capacity to develop nuclear weapons, improve its ballistic missile capabilities, and support terrorism. I also understand that our policy regarding the JCPOA is currently under review and, if confirmed, I would expect to contribute to that review. Pending the review's outcome, I believe we must insist on strict compliance and enforcement of the JCPOA. This includes being vigilant in ensuring Iran fully adheres to the agreement's verification provisions. If Iran decides to abrogate the JCPOA, the Department of Defense should remain prepared to provide all options to the President to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

**In your opinion, how would Iran react to action by the United States to unilaterally withdraw from the JCPOA?**

I believe Iran does not need the pretext of a U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA to pursue its nuclear weapons ambitions. However, I believe this issue should be considered as part of the ongoing review of U.S. policy.

**Afghanistan**

**What are the key U.S. national security interests in Afghanistan and how would you describe the strategy to secure them?**

The primary interest of the United States is to prevent Afghanistan from being used as a safe haven for terrorists to attack the United States or our allies and partners. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary of Defense as he develops and executes a strategy for Afghanistan.

**In a hearing on Afghanistan before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2017, General Nicholson said that we are in a stalemate after more than 15 years of fighting.**

**Do you agree with General Nicholson that we are in a stalemate in Afghanistan, and if so, what strategic changes would you recommend?**

I agree with Secretary Mattis' statement that "we are not winning in Afghanistan." If confirmed, I will support the Secretary of Defense and General Nicholson as they evaluate changes that they would recommend to our approach in Afghanistan.

**Do you agree with General Nicholson that there is a need for additional coalition troops in Afghanistan?**

I believe it is important for the Department's civilian leadership to weigh seriously the military advice of the commander on the ground. I also support the President's decision to delegate force level decisions to the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I will work with General Nicholson to make recommendations to the Secretary of Defense on force levels and authorities.

**What key Afghan capabilities need to be enhanced to promote long-term strategic stability?**

As General Nicholson has highlighted, it appears the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) need to enhance their close air support capabilities, develop their leaders, and counter corruption. If confirmed, I will examine what other Afghan capabilities are needed to promote long-term strategic stability.

**What is the role of U.S. and coalition military operations in promoting reconciliation with the Afghan Taliban and other insurgent groups?**

I understand that the State Department serves as the lead agency for coordinating U.S. reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan and that the Department of Defense supports the State Department in this capacity. I believe the DoD role is to develop the capability and professionalism of the ANDSF, which helps establish improved security conditions in Afghanistan and create the conditions for reconciliation.

**What is your view of Russian claims that they are in discussions with the Afghan Taliban to promote reconciliation and also to partner in the fight against ISIS?**

I believe all regional States should work within the framework of an Afghan-led and -owned peace process.

**Do you agree that the sanctuary for extremist forces in Pakistan is a key factor affecting stability and security in Afghanistan? If so, what recommendations would you have to end this sanctuary?**

I believe that sanctuary and freedom of movement for the Afghan Taliban and associated militant networks inside Pakistani territory continue to be contributing factors that negatively impact security conditions and stability inside Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will examine ways in which we can end Pakistan's sanctuary for militant networks.

**This year, Afghanistan is on track to harvest the largest poppy crop in recent history. Estimates are that the Taliban get anywhere from 30 percent to 80 percent of their funding from the narcotics trade.**

**What role, if any, do you see the U.S. military playing in the counter narcotics fight in Afghanistan?**

If confirmed, I will examine the role of the U.S. military in countering drug trafficking in Afghanistan.

**Do you agree that any future reductions in the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces from the 352,000 troop level should be based on the security conditions in Afghanistan at the time the reductions would occur?**

If confirmed, I will need to examine carefully reductions in the force level of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. In principle, I believe recommendations on force structure should be based on security conditions in Afghanistan.

## **Yemen**

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

U.S. national security interests in Yemen are countering terrorism, including the Islamic State in Yemen and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and denying safe havens for terrorists to attack U.S. and partner regional interests; maintaining freedom of navigation in the Bab el Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea; and facilitating a return to the UN-sponsored political negotiation process as the only means to end the civil war and to ensure lasting political stability in Yemen.

**In your opinion, should we be doing more to help the Saudi coalition in its efforts to find a solution to the conflict in Yemen, and if so, what steps would you recommend?**

Saudi Arabia is a critical partner in our counterterrorism efforts and I believe targeted U.S. military assistance to support Saudi efforts--such as ballistic missile defense, logistics support, and aerial refueling--to defend its borders is appropriate. Saudi Arabia is a critical counterterrorism partner and we are committed to securing their territorial integrity. At the same

time, we continually engage Saudi Arabia and the coalition that we do not see a military solution to the conflict, and urge all parties to return to UN-sponsored peace talks.

**The Houthis are launching missiles deep into Saudi Arabia and conducting regular raids into Saudi Arabia's southern territory. In your estimation, do the Saudis have a choice of whether or not to continue fighting in Yemen?**

Houthi missile attacks and raids are legitimate security threats to Saudi Arabia. As good partners, the United States is right to help Saudi Arabia defend its territory against these attacks. As previously stated, however, I believe the current Saudi-led coalition in Yemen alone will not enable a military solution to the conflict and favor a negotiated solution by all parties.

**In your view, what conditions in Yemen need to be reached for the Houthis to be willing to negotiate? Is the Saudi-led coalition capable of creating those conditions and what is the appropriate role for the United States in support of the coalition?**

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2241 creates the conditions for all parties to broker a political solution to the conflict. I am not confident that further military conflict will contribute to reaching these conditions. The United States remains committed to defending the territorial integrity of our partners and enabling peaceful diplomatic solution to the crisis.

**In your view, is it possible for the United States to provide the Saudi-led coalition with assistance designed to reduce civilian casualties without becoming a "cobelligerent"? If so, what assistance do you believe should be provided?**

Yes. The United States should provide military weapons to ensure that Saudi Arabia has the ability to defend itself, and support for the Saudi-led military operations against the Houthi insurgents coupled with mentoring, coaching, and advice on best practices to mitigate the risk of civilian harm, including through the development and use of "no-strike-lists." At every opportunity, we should reinforce to Saudi counterparts the importance of precision targeting practices to reduce the risk of civilian casualties.

**To what extent are the Houthis, supported by Iran, a threat to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea? What policy positions would you recommend for the United States to address this threat?**

Iran is providing support to the Houthis, improving capabilities and enabling maritime attacks. The United States should remain committed to ensuring freedom of navigation in the Bab el Mandeb and the Red Sea. The United States should also continue to support the UN-led process to facilitate and monitor maritime movement of goods into Yemen.

**In your opinion, what would be the implications of the United States cutting off the sale of precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners?**

Withholding PGMs will likely force Saudi Arabia to use less precise munitions to protect their borders, potentially resulting in greater collateral damage. Ultimately, this is a Saudi-led coalition operation, and withholding U.S. support will not hasten an end to the conflict. That

said, there is no military solution to the conflict and reaching a negotiated political settlement as soon as possible is critical.

## **Russia**

**Senior U.S. military officials have said Russia is the number one threat to the United States.**

**What are the challenges to U.S. national security interests from Russia and what are the key principles that must underpin a successful strategy to protect our interests?**

I agree with Secretary Mattis that Russia has chosen to be a strategic competitor of the United States. Russia's actions are adversarial and it seeks a return to great power status through zero-sum, unconstructive means. We must be clear-eyed about Russia's desired end-states and stand up to Russia's behavior, to include defending our core interests if Russia chooses to act contrary to those interests. Challenges posed by Russia include alarming messages regarding the use of nuclear weapons; treaty violations; the use of hybrid warfare tactics to destabilize countries in its periphery; and involvement in cyber hacking and information warfare. Buttressing NATO will be fundamental to meeting these challenges, and we will need a whole of government strategy that ensures that the Department of Defense is prepared to counter both traditional and emerging threats that would reinforce U.S. national interests.

I support the President's desire to look for areas of potential cooperation with Russia as part of our strategic approach. Engagement should serve as a means to achieve national objectives and must be based on a realistic appraisal of the challenges and opportunities.

**Should the United States condition its military engagement with Russia on certain changes in Russian behavior, and if so what conditions, if any, would you recommend?**

The United States is currently prohibited from engaging in military-to-military cooperation with the Russian Federation in response to its aggressive actions in Ukraine, per Section 1232 of the 2017 NDAA. In order for the restrictions to be lifted, Russia must "cease its occupation of Ukrainian territory and its aggressive activities that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization." If confirmed, I would support this approach.

**Do you agree with General Scaparrotti that our current force posture in Europe is "inadequate" to deter Russia? What changes to our force posture would you recommend?**

The United States has taken significant steps to enhance the readiness and responsiveness of U.S. forces in the European theater, as well as to build capacity in the Baltic States to deter further Russian aggression. Additionally, our NATO Allies are taking concrete steps to share the burden of common defense and meet or exceed the commitment to reach the two percent defense spending goal that their leaders set at the NATO summit in 2014. That said, NATO should



continue to improve its posture by emphasizing increased readiness; missile defense; counter anti-access/area-denial capabilities; and combat enablers like command and control systems, precision munitions, and joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

If confirmed, I will consult with the Joint Staff and the U.S. European Command Commander on what future efforts and investments will be appropriate. I will also work to ensure our NATO allies spend their defense dollars wisely in pursuit of these goals and to transform their forces for the threats we face today and in the future.

**Should the Department of Defense revisit the European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) initiative announced in 2015? If so, how should any such revision to our force posture in Europe take into account U.S. objectives and plans under the European Deterrence Initiative to bolster the military capabilities of our European allies?**

The European Infrastructure Consolidation (EIC) and the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) are separate but complementary U.S. initiatives which continue to be implemented in parallel. As I understand it, the EIC will not reduce our military capabilities in Europe, but will shift their location within Europe to lower costs, eliminate excesses, and maximize utility. The ERI will build on these adjustments by adding even more capability, including through funding increased rotational ground, air, and maritime forces in Europe. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) Commander on any future adjustments to our posture in Europe.

**Do you support continued U.S. security assistance to Ukraine, and if so, how does the provision of such assistance contribute to a broader U.S. regional security strategy?**

Yes. The Department's ongoing train, equip, and advise efforts are building the capacity of Ukraine's forces to effectively preserve and enforce its territorial integrity. These programs, combined with efforts to improve the readiness and responsiveness of U.S. forces in Europe through programs like ERI, help to deter further aggressive Russian actions in the region.

**Do you support providing lethal defensive security assistance to Ukraine as in the interests of the United States?**

Yes, I believe providing lethal defensive security assistance would allow Ukraine to better defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia must understand there is a cost to its provocative, destabilizing, and dangerous actions.

**In your view, what are the key elements of a strategy to counter Russian hybrid tactics that employ both hard and soft power and present attribution challenges?**

The existence of credible and capable U.S. forces continues to serve as the cornerstone for deterring Russia from seeking to undermine our interests around the world. In addition to this hard power capability, countering Russian hybrid tactics requires a whole of government effort to counter its information and influence operations. The United States, our Allies, and partners

must employ all elements of national power to disrupt Russian influence networks while also working to increase resilience in the face of Russian pressure.

**What is your assessment of the Russian malign influence threat, and what recommendations, if any, would you have for the role of the U.S. Government, and the Department of Defense in particular, in countering that threat?**

Russia's malign influence is an issue of great concern. Their disinformation campaign is part of a broader, integrated approach that also involves elements of cyber operations, strategic messaging, and espionage. Any strategy to respond to such campaigns must account for these dimensions, by an integrated cross-governmental approach, and explore both defensive and offensive measures.

### **Russia's Violation of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**

**Russia's deployment of a nuclear ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) in violation of the 1987 INF Treaty poses a risk to our NATO Allies and U.S. forces in Europe.**

**Given the unlikelihood that Russia will return to compliance with the INF Treaty, how should the United States address the military and political implications of this new nuclear ground-launched cruise missile?**

The Department continues to assess response options and must respond in a way that ensures continued denial of any significant military advantage to Russia, that disincentivizes this type of behavior in the future, and that upholds the viability of such arms control agreements in the future. If Russia is permitted to violate the Treaty without adverse consequences, such actions will very likely erode the foundations of current and future arms control agreements and initiatives.

**If Russia fails to return to compliance under the INF Treaty, should we extend the New START treaty for an additional five years, as stipulated by the treaty?**

I believe Russia's pattern of non-compliance with its arms control obligations has serious implications for the future efficacy of arms control in general, including the New START Treaty. This issue should be addressed as part of the review of U.S. arms control commitments that is currently underway. If confirmed, I would make my participation in this review a priority.

**Is there a gap in U.S. military capability that could be filled by a system comparable to the GLCM?**

I understand that the Administration is reviewing this issue. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Committee to address this issue.

**Should we increase NATO's defenses against these new cruise missiles as well as against Russia's air and sea-launched cruise missiles?**

In January, the President ordered a Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR) to identify ways of strengthening missile defense capabilities, rebalancing homeland and theater defense priorities, and highlighting priority funding areas. I understand that cruise missile defense will also be among the issues considered in that review.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

#### **In your opinion, does the NATO Alliance benefit the national security interests of the United States?**

Absolutely. NATO is a major source of political will and operational capability that enables the United States to more effectively deter and counter threats to our national security. NATO also provides an unparalleled multinational command structure and mechanisms to build interoperable military capabilities.

Working with our Allies allows the United States to respond to global security challenges with greater legitimacy and with fewer U.S. resources. Allies enhance regional security, especially in Europe and in Afghanistan, where NATO invoked Article 5 and deployed outside of Europe for the first time following the 9/11 attacks.

Allies also contribute significant military support to U.S.-led, NATO, and other multilateral operations abroad. NATO countries that host forward-deployed U.S. forces or bases (whether steady-state or rotational) provide essential support to achieving U.S. objectives.

#### **What are the major strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years?**

I see the following objectives for NATO: deter aggression and defend Allies if necessary; increase the resilience of European Allies against such threats; more equitably share the responsibility and burden of Allied defense; enhance NATO's role in the fight against terrorism, and in selected cases, project stability to counter emerging threats.

As Secretary Mattis testified, the Alliance must harness renewed political will to confront and walk back aggressive Russian actions and other threats to the security of its members. Maintaining Alliance solidarity, enhancing defense burden sharing, deterring Russia malign activities and enhancing the Alliance's role in fighting terrorism are other major objectives.

#### **In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges for NATO and the most important capability improvements that the Alliance must make to deal with the accelerated and growing threats it faces?**

While it is difficult to predict all the challenges the Alliance will face, the Alliance will need to confront and walk back aggressive Russian actions and other threats to the security of its members. It will also face a critical challenge in maintaining solidarity on issues related to deterrence, defense, and projecting stability in support of the North Atlantic community's interests.

In the near-term, NATO should emphasize increased readiness, missile defense, counter anti-access/area-denial capabilities, the ability to counter hybrid threats, and combat enablers like command and control systems, precision munitions, and joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

**What is your perspective on accusations that our NATO Allies do not carry their fair share of the security burden?**

At the 2014 Wales Summit, all 28 Allies pledged to halt cuts in defense spending and agreed “to aim to move towards” spending 2% of GDP on defense - with 20% going to major equipment purchases - within a decade.

I agree with Secretary Mattis’ calls for Allies to live up to the Wales Pledge, and I am encouraged that Allies agreed to undertake additional commitments at the NATO Leaders’ Meeting at the end of May, including doing more to fight terrorism and to ensure equitable burden sharing.

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

Yes. NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance for as long as nuclear weapons exist. The Alliance's nuclear force is an effective deterrent. Allies reaffirmed this stance at the Wales Summit, and I support the conviction that NATO must maintain the full range of capabilities necessary to maintain Alliance security, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities.

**If confirmed, will you support fielding the dual capable F-35 modifications for the United States and its allies in the shortest feasible time?**

Yes.

**Balkans**

**How would you describe today’s threats to the security and stability of the Balkans?**

The Balkans, specifically the Western Balkans, are far removed from the wars of Yugoslav secession and ethnic strife of the 1990s and early 2000s. Three countries (Albania, Croatia, and Montenegro) are NATO members, and with the exception of Kosovo, all other countries are in NATO’s Partnership for Peace. Today’s primary threats to security and stability in the Balkans are not state-on-state conflict and intra-state conflict. However, complex and inter-connected challenges continue to threaten the region’s long-term stability, including: corruption, organized crime, and fragile rule of law; malign Russian influence – Russia uses ethnic, historic, and religious ties to the region to promote an anti-NATO and anti-U.S. agenda; and terrorist organizations, which exploit the region’s relative poverty and fragile rule of law to recruit and to transit fighters from and through the region.

DoD works with interagency partners to promote institutional reform, professionalize military establishments, and counter Russian malign influence throughout the region.

**What do you see as the role of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) and what conditions are required before that presence can be reduced or eliminated?**

KFOR's mission is to maintain a secure environment and freedom of movement throughout Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244. KFOR is the "third responder" to security incidents, behind the Kosovo Police (first responder) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission known as EULEX (second responder). NATO uses a "conditions based" concept to determine KFOR force levels.

As the only institution universally supported by all ethnic communities in Kosovo, KFOR remains critical to ensuring freedom of movement and a safe and secure environment throughout Kosovo. The key conditions that will allow a reduction in KFOR is for Kosovo to have trained, professional, and multi-ethnic security forces to provide both domestic security and territorial defense, and for Kosovo to have good relations with its neighbors, including neighbors that do not recognize its independence.

**Asia and the Pacific**

**The Defense Department's January 2012 strategic guidance, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense," states "while the U.S. military will continue to contribute to security globally, we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region."**

**What are U.S. security priorities for the Asia-Pacific region?**

I understand that ensuring a safe, secure, prosperous, and free Asia-Pacific region is a top priority for the United States. If confirmed, I will work to continue efforts to deter not only conflict, but also coercion as sovereign countries in the Asia-Pacific have the right to make decisions freely.

**Will the Trump Administration continue the rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region? If so, what does the term "rebalance" mean to you in terms of force structure, posture, basing, capabilities, and funding?**

I believe the Asia-Pacific region is likely to remain a consequential region for the United States for decades to come. If confirmed, I will support the Secretary of Defense in taking steps to preserve and enhance the U.S. military advantage in the region.

**How do you assess the strength and health of our alliances in the region?**

In my view, our alliances form the foundation of U.S. engagement in the Asia-Pacific region and have done so for decades. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we are positioned to defend and advance U.S. interests in the region, including fulfilling treaty and statutory obligations to

our allies and partners.

**There are increasing calls from members of Congress for an Asia-Pacific Stability Initiative, similar to the European Deterrence Initiative, with funding of up to \$7.5 billion over five years. Do you agree with such an Asia-Pacific Stability Initiative?**

I share the Secretary of Defense's view that the Asia-Pacific region is a top priority for the United States and, if confirmed, will work to help develop an Asia-Pacific Stability Initiative that, in the Secretary's words, "complements the ongoing large-scale investment in our budget to improve and reinforce the U.S. military's capabilities across the region." I will also work to assess the specific capability investments and other changes that are needed to adapt our forces, posture, and presence to achieve our regional objectives.

**If so, what would be your recommended objectives and priorities of the Defense Department and how should it use the funding, if appropriated?**

If confirmed, I will assess the objectives and priorities of the Department of Defense as they relate to the Asia-Pacific region, and make recommendations to the Secretary on appropriate levels of funding.

### **North Korea**

**In your view, what should be the U.S. overall strategy to mitigate the threat posed by North Korea to our allies in the region and to the United States?**

It is my understanding, based on statements by Administration officials, that the Administration seeks a denuclearized Korean peninsula. I also understand that the United States will work with international partners, China in particular, to increase diplomatic and financial costs on North Korea to compel Kim Jong-Un to change his provocative, destabilizing, and dangerous behavior.

**What policy recommendations would you make to ensure United States Forces Korea has the capability to defeat sites in North Korea containing weapons of mass destruction?**

If confirmed, I would begin by consulting with U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), our allies in the Republic of Korea government, and U.S. Combatant Commanders supporting U.S. operations in Korea to understand the gap between what they need and what they have available.

**The deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile system to South Korea is a highly visible and concrete action to counter the North Korea missile threat.**

**What other steps would you recommend the Trump Administration take to deter Kim Jong-Un and ensure the safety and security of South Korea and U.S. forces stationed in the region?**

I understand that the deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to the Republic of Korea is one highly visible and concrete action the United States is taking to counter the North Korean missile threat. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense to continue to improve our force posture on the Korean peninsula in consultation with our South Korean allies. I believe military deployments, training, and exercises that improve our defensive capabilities and demonstrate a clear determination to defend our allies are important parts of a comprehensive strategy designed to deter North Korea from taking aggressive actions.

## **China**

**If confirmed, what policies would you recommend to deter war with China, maintain free passage through the global commons, and assure our Pacific allies and friends?**

I consider it important to manage our relationship with China in a way that does not inadvertently escalate to military confrontation through miscalculation, misunderstanding, or miscommunication. I believe we can do so through actions that demonstrate our clear resolve to defend U.S. interests and allies. Therefore, we should continue to make the investments necessary to ensure that we can defend our interests and uphold our security commitments in the region. If confirmed, I will examine what policies can help maintain free passage through global commons and reassure our allies and partners.

**In your view, what effect is China's expanding economy and growing military having on the region-at-large and how does that growth influence the U.S. security posture in the Asia-Pacific region?**

I understand that China's rapid rise and the relative lack of transparency surrounding its growing military capabilities create uncertainty and tensions between China and its neighbors. If confirmed, I will examine what effect this has on the U.S. security posture in the region, but at a minimum I believe it highlights the importance of a strong American presence in the region and our alliance relationships.

**What policies would you recommend the United States emplace, both unilaterally and in coordination with allies and partners, to counter the increasing challenge posed by China in the East and South China Seas?**

If confirmed, I will evaluate what policies the United States can implement unilaterally, bilaterally, and multilaterally to counter the challenge China poses in the East and South China Seas.

**Given that China's land reclamation in the South China Sea demonstrates a disregard for international rules and norms, would you recommend the Department of Defense support the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea? Do you believe the United States should ratify the convention?**

Although China is a party to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, it refused to recognize

the ruling of the arbitration tribunal established under the Convention to resolve disputes, in this case a dispute with the Philippines over sovereignty in the South China Sea. This is a challenge to the Convention itself. I believe upholding freedom of navigation and overflight world-wide is essential to U.S. economic and national security interests. If confirmed, I will support policy measures designed to preserve and protect the continued global mobility of U.S. forces.

**China's defense budget seems to be increasing at an alarming rate year after year. However, China's plans and strategies do not seem aimed at military domination outside of its immediate neighborhood. How would you explain this discrepancy and why China is engaged in such a massive military build-up?**

It is my understanding that China's global footprint is growing every year, and China increasingly seeks the capability to safeguard its trade, investments, and citizens abroad. However, I believe China's military investments and activities, though they may be focused on an expansion of China's regional capabilities, will allow China to increase its military reach beyond its immediate neighborhood if desired.

### **Freedom of Navigation Operations**

**This Committee has heard from several high-ranking officials within the Pentagon and from combatant commands that they are constrained from carrying out Tier III freedom of navigation operations (requiring White House approval) because of a lack of timely decision-making and a slow approval process. The Committee has observed that no Tier III operations to date have taken place since the Trump Administration took office. While the Committee understands the need to have broad interagency agreement on such operations, a several month delay for approval of these requests seems excessive.**

**What policy recommendations would you make for the United States to project power into the region and counter the aggressive behavior of China, and how to speed decision time for freedom of navigation operations approval?**

Protecting freedom of navigation and overflight is a longstanding policy of the United States and is necessary to maintain global mobility of U.S. forces in all areas of the globe. If confirmed, I will support policy measures to preserve and protect the global mobility of U.S. forces, such as continuing to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, and that includes in the South China Sea.

**Would you recommend increased authority be delegated to combatant commanders to carry out freedom of navigation operations? If not, what other recommendations would you make to streamline the process to prevent unnecessary delay in considering such requests?**

I understand that DoD routinely conducts Freedom of Navigation Operations throughout the world in an open, even-handed manner, challenging excessive maritime claims based on principle rather than identity of the coastal State asserting the claim. For example, in FY 2016, DoD challenged 22 different coastal States including allies, partners, and other countries.



FONOPs in the South China Sea are only a small portion of the overall program in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world. If confirmed, I will review the processes in place and recommend amendments if necessary to ensure Combatant Commanders can conduct regular FONOPs in a routine manner throughout the globe to protect freedom of navigation and overflight.

## **India**

**Congress and this Committee strongly support an enhanced defense relationship between the United States and India. Over the coming years, India could be one of our strongest and most dependable military partners in the region.**

**What is your view of the current state of the U.S.-India security relationship?**

I believe the U.S.-India relationship has strengthened significantly over the last decade, particularly with regard to security and defense issues. I am encouraged by the growing collaboration and the increasing level of technology and trade initiatives, and if confirmed, will look for opportunities to advance the U.S.-India security relationship.

**What policy recommendations would you make to bolster the overall defense relationship between our two countries?**

If confirmed, I will support efforts that continue to strengthen our defense cooperation with India, and I will assess what specific steps can be taken to bolster the overall defense relationship.

## **Pakistan**

**What is your view of the current state of the U.S.-Pakistan security relationship?**

I believe it is important that the United States maintains a constructive relationship with Pakistan that advances mutual interests, but the United States should also demonstrate its serious concerns about Pakistan providing safe havens for militant groups.

**What policy changes, if any, would you recommend for U.S. relations with Pakistan, particularly in terms of military-to-military relations?**

If confirmed, I will examine what policy changes, if any, I would recommend for the U.S. military-to-military relationship with Pakistan.

**U.S. security assistance and other support to Pakistan is designed to foster greater cooperation in areas of mutual security interest.**

**Do you support this as a construct for future assistance?**

If confirmed, I would need to assess whether the current model for U.S. security assistance is a

useful construct for future assistance.

**What areas do you consider to be of shared security interest between the United States and Pakistan?**

I believe that the United States and Pakistan have some common interests, including countering terrorism, and have cooperated against Al Qaeda and its associates and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province.

**What changes, if any, would you recommend in security assistance to Pakistan?**

If confirmed, I would assess what changes to security assistance to Pakistan should be considered.

**Africa**

**What is your assessment of the current counterterrorism efforts in Africa? What are the associated policy objectives?**

The Department's current counterterrorism efforts have had largely positive effects and serve as an example of how a combination of targeted investments and strong partnership can achieve the associated U.S. policy objectives to protect the homeland and western interests.

**What changes, if any, would you recommend?**

I understand our current efforts reflect a balance between our investment in enabling partners and, in limited cases, unilateral action. If confirmed, I would seek to assess our current approach and to identify ways to improve our efforts.

**Ballistic Missile Defense**

**The U.S. homeland and its deployed forces enjoy a measure of protection against ballistic missile threats from rogue nations such as North Korea and Iran, yet the threat continues to grow. During the past year, North Korea conducted several missile tests and continued development of mobile long-range missiles. Likewise, Iran continues to test ballistic missiles of increasing range. Russia and China also continue to deploy ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles that threaten U.S. forces, allies, and the U.S. homeland.**

**What policies would you recommend for U.S. missile defense capabilities in the following areas: (1) homeland missile defense; (2) regional missile defense; (3) improved discrimination and sensors; (4) next generation missile defense; and (5) defense against cruise and hypersonic missiles?**

The President directed the commencement of the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR) to identify ways to strengthen missile defense capabilities, rebalance homeland and theater defense

priorities, and provide the necessary policy and strategy framework for our nation's missile defense systems. Defending the nation, our deployed forces abroad, and U.S. allies from ballistic missiles is one of the Department's highest priorities.

I understand that the BMDR, running concurrent with the Nuclear Posture Review, will be overseen by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and include interagency partners. The process will culminate in a final report and will be delivered to the President by the end of the year.

The policy areas referenced above will be examined during the course of the BMDR. If confirmed, I will support the conduct of the BMDR and work to implement approved recommendations following its completion.

**Do you believe the United States should encourage our regional allies and partners to increase their missile defense capabilities to contribute to regional security and help reduce the burden on U.S. forces and requirements?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will continue the Department's policy of encouraging allies and partners to increase their missile defense capabilities.

### **Nuclear Weapons and Stockpile Stewardship**

**In your view, what is the role of U.S. nuclear weapons?**

The first role of U.S. nuclear weapons is deterrence. This deterrence role is explicit in the President's direction that DoD conduct a comprehensive review of U.S. nuclear weapons policy. Our nuclear weapons are weapons of last resort. They are the bedrock of U.S. security, and have prevented aggression against the United States and provided a measure of assurance to allies. Importantly, a flexible, robust, and survivable nuclear arsenal underpins our ability to deploy conventional forces worldwide in support of U.S. national security interests; provides the President with credible response options to strengthen deterrence; and supports U.S. nonproliferation policy by extending deterrence to allies, thereby dissuading them from acquiring nuclear weapons themselves. I understand that the Department plans to complete the Nuclear Posture Review by the end of this calendar year.

**President Obama's June 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy affirmed that the United States will maintain a nuclear triad, noting that "Retaining all three Triad legs will best maintain strategic stability at reasonable cost, while hedging against potential technical problems or vulnerabilities."**

**Would you recommend the Trump Administration continue the policy of modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy nuclear weapons complex as a critical national security priority?**

Yes. The need for modernizing each leg of the nuclear Triad has been testified to repeatedly by the civilian and military leadership of the Department. It is also supported by language in the

FY17 National Defense Authorization Act. The Nuclear Posture Review will consider each leg of the triad and all elements of U.S. nuclear forces and posture to ensure that our nuclear deterrent is modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready, and appropriately tailored to deter 21st-century threats and reassure our allies.

**Would you support the Long Range Standoff Weapon (LRSO) and its timely replacement of the AGM-86 Air-Launched Cruise Missile?**

The current AGM-86B Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) makes a unique contribution to U.S. nuclear deterrence capabilities. It is well past its original intended service life, and its viability cannot be assured past the next decade due to age-related challenges and advancements in air defense capabilities. If the United States is to retain the capabilities that the ALCM currently provides, I believe the Long-Range Standoff Weapon (LRSO) will be a necessary element of the bomber leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. I understand that the Nuclear Posture Review will consider U.S. plans for retaining cruise missile capability, along with all elements of U.S. nuclear forces and posture, to ensure that our nuclear deterrent is modern, robust, flexible, resilient, ready, and appropriately tailored to deter 21st-century threats and reassure our allies.

**Defense Security Cooperation**

**What is the appropriate role of the Department of Defense in the conduct of security sector assistance?**

The Department of Defense places a high level of importance on building the capacity of our allies and partners as members of coalitions and as regional contributors to addressing security challenges. The Department continues to execute Title 10 and Title 22 security cooperation programs that are consistent with foreign policy goals and objectives. Doing so ensures we are building the capacity of our partners to contribute to the security upon which our foreign policy depends.

**What should be the Department's relationship with the Department of State in the conduct of these activities?**

Security sector assistance is a foundation of both our national security and defense strategies. Recognizing that Department of Defense efforts must be synchronized with the general foreign policy direction of the Department of State, I understand that mechanisms are in place at the country team level, at the regional combatant command level, and here in Washington to ensure that DoD execution of security cooperation programs is consistent with foreign policy goals and objectives.

**What should be the strategic objectives of the Defense Department's efforts to build the capabilities of a partner nation's security forces?**

Our strategic objective in building the capabilities of partners is to help them develop effective and legitimate security institutions that can provide for their countries' internal security and contribute to regional and multilateral responses to threats and instability. This, in turn, mitigates

the burden on U.S. forces responding to security threats outside the United States and promotes interoperability between our forces.

**In your view, is the Defense Department appropriately organized and resourced to effectively conduct such activities? If not, what changes would you recommend?**

The NDAA for FY 2017 includes significant changes to DoD's security cooperation enterprise that will allow the Department to organize and resource security cooperation more effectively. The newly established chapter of Title 10 codifies DoD security cooperation policy oversight, resource allocation, and program management functions, mandating an Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AM&E) framework and requiring an annual security cooperation budget justification. Full realization of the reforms will take years to achieve, but I believe these changes will ensure greater strategic coherence of the Department's security cooperation activities and more impactful results. If confirmed, I will seek to work with the Congress to ensure the Department is on track in fulfilling this congressional mandate.

### **Special Operations Forces**

**The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 included provisions designed to enhance the oversight and advocacy of special operations forces by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SOLIC). Among other things, these reforms establish an administrative chain of command from the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command through the ASD SOLIC to the Secretary of Defense, mirroring the relationship between the service secretaries and service chiefs.**

**What is your understanding of the “service secretary-like” responsibilities of the ASD SOLIC for special operations forces?**

The ASD(SO/LIC) is Department’s lead civilian policy official for all matters related to special operations and low intensity conflict and the “Service Secretary-like” civilian with the responsibility for oversight and advocacy of USSOCOM and the organization, training, and the equipping of special operations forces.

The ASD (SO/LIC) is responsible for providing both advocacy and oversight for the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces, while ensuring these efforts are aligned with national priorities and supports the national defense strategy.

**In your view, how should these responsibilities be balanced with other responsibilities related to policy and operational issues?**

If I am confirmed, I will seek to work within the Department and with the benefit of congressional consultation to ensure that there is proper balance.

### **Continuing Use of Guantanamo as a Detention Center**

**Would you advise the President to transfer additional detainees to Guantanamo?**

I believe we should develop an enduring detainee policy that is appropriate for enemy personnel captured on the battlefield.

**What should be the Defense Department's long-term detention strategy?**

A long-term detention strategy is necessary for those detainees who pose a continuing threat to the security of the United States. We should also continue to conduct a review process using available information to determine whether a detainee no longer poses a continuing threat to the security of the United States and whether there is a suitable country to which to transfer such a detainee.

**Do you think the U.S. Government should continue the Periodic Review Board Process and continue to transfer detainees to other countries, subject to the restrictions currently in law?**

If confirmed, I will familiarize myself with the Periodic Review Board Process and assess whether to recommend the continuation or cessation of detainee transfers to other countries, subject to current U.S. law.

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## **Qualifications**

### **What background and experience do you possess that qualify you for this position?**

I believe my background and experience working in the Department of Defense and on Capitol Hill, as well as my experience in the private sector, qualify me to assume this position. In DoD, I served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (ISP). In this role, I acted on behalf of the Assistant Secretary and assisted him in his role as advisor to both the Under Secretary and the Secretary of Defense on policy matters within the ISP portfolio. A number of the issues within ISP at the time are now divided among various Assistant Secretaries within OUSD(P).

I also gained experience with these issues during my time on the professional staff of the House Armed Services Committee, where I was responsible for defense policy issues. My background in working these issues in connection with the annual National Defense Authorization Act not only allowed me to gain a detailed understanding of these issues but to appreciate the important role the Congress plays in providing congressional oversight.

In addition, my work in the private sector has helped keep me current on many of the issues that fall within the purview of the OUSD(P). Therefore, I believe my substantive experience qualifies me, if confirmed, to perform the duties of the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

## **Major Challenges and Priorities**

### **If confirmed, what broad priorities will you establish?**

If confirmed, I would seek to assist the Secretary of Defense in developing policies that support two overarching priorities: 1) ensuring the American people are protected against a broad range of threats; and 2) preserving U.S. freedom of action worldwide in support of our vital national interests.

I believe it is essential to focus on countering threats that are both regional and functional in nature. These include, for example, North Korea, Russia, and Iran, as well as cross-domain challenges like developing strategies for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and cyber attacks.

I also believe it is important to ensure our global force posture aligns with our National Defense Strategy and supports our ability to operate worldwide in support of our national security interests. I would also work to strengthen our alliances and relationships with strategic partners. This includes collaborating closely with my Joint Staff, State Department, and interagency colleagues, assessing the effectiveness of our security cooperation programs, and seeking ways to build partnership capacity.

**In your view, what are the major challenges, if any, you would confront if confirmed as Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?**

The major challenges I foresee, if confirmed, would be ensuring that the OSD Policy organization is responsive to the Secretary of Defense's requirements and guidance in a timely manner. This includes ensuring proper and effective coordination between OSD(P), the Joint Staff, and the interagency and ensuring that resources are properly and efficiently distributed within the OSD Policy organization.

**If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address these challenges?**

If confirmed, I would first solicit Secretary Mattis' views on the structure, functioning, and responsiveness of OSD Policy before making any recommendations.

**Relations with Congress**

**What are your views on the state of the relationship between the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with the Congress in general?**

I am committed, if confirmed, to ensuring a proper, collegial, and responsive relationship between OUSD(P) and the Congress, and in particular with this committee. Having worked on Capitol Hill, I am acutely aware that the Department of Defense and the Congress are partners in ensuring U.S. national security and I am committed to fostering that partnership.

**If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between the Congress and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?**

If confirmed, I would look forward to engaging actively with the Congress on a regular basis on policy issues.

**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 position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?**

Yes.



**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?**

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 in a timely manner?**

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.