

Advance Policy Questions for Lieutenant General Joseph L. Votel, USA
Nominee for Commander, United States Special Operations Command

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and subsequent reforms related to special operations forces have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and the chain of command by clearly delineating the combatant commanders' responsibilities and authorities and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. These reforms have also vastly improved cooperation between the services and the combatant commanders, among other things, in joint training and education and in the execution of military operations.

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

Perhaps. In my time as Chief of Staff at USSOCOM I saw many examples where we were challenged in our dealings with peculiarities of each of the Services on personnel, readiness, and training issues. If confirmed I will work closely with the Service Chiefs to align our processes as much as possible under the current legislation before I would consider seeking a modification to Goldwater-Nichols.

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

Whether through changes to policy or legislation, in my view USSOCOM still needs greater personnel management authority to shape mid- and senior-grade Special Operations Forces (SOF) operators to meet USSOCOM defined requirements. Promotions, selection for command, selection for advanced educational opportunities, foreign language testing policy, and foreign language proficiency bonus payment policy all differ significantly by Service and are all primarily crafted to support Service needs.

Do you believe that the role of the combatant commanders, including the Commander, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation is appropriate and the policies and processes in existence allow that role to be fulfilled?

Yes. I have had the pleasure to work very closely with each of our Geographic and Functional Combatant Commanders, particularly in the past three years, and I believe there is tremendous synergy built into the system created by Goldwater-Nichols.

Qualifications:

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

By experience, training and education I have the requisite skills to lead this Combatant Command now and in the future. I have commanded at multiple levels throughout the special operations community including assignments as a Ranger Battalion Commander, the Ranger Regiment Commander, as a forward Special Operations Task force Commander in Iraq and Afghanistan and most recently as the Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command. I've also served as Deputy Commanding

General for the Army's 82nd Airborne Division, and have throughout my career as an Infantry Officer maintained close ties to my Service colleagues outside the realm of Special Operations. My joint service as the Chief of Staff at US Special Operations Command as well as my experience as both Deputy and Commander at Joint Special Operations Command has prepared me to operate at the senior levels of Government. Throughout my service I have gained valuable experience and built useful relationships with international, interagency and intelligence community partners.

Relationships

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

The Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of Defense is the USSOCOM Commander's next superior command authority in the chain of command, as your introductory paragraph stated. If confirmed, I will look to the Secretary of Defense for the operational authority, and the resources, to develop and employ the most well-trained and capable Special Operations Forces our nation can muster to meet the challenges of a highly uncertain global security environment now and in the future. . The USSOCOM Commander owes the Secretary of Defense his best military advice on all aspects of recruiting, training, equipping, managing and employing Special Operations Forces in support of his, and the President's, national security objectives.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, USD(P), is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy. The USD(P) develops, coordinates and oversees the implementation of a wide variety of Department policy, including matters related to planning, programming, budgeting, and execution of special operations activities. USD(P) also exercises authority, direction and control over the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict ASD(SO/LIC), who is responsible for overall supervision of Special Operations activities. If confirmed, I will work closely with USD(P) to ensure USSOCOM activities are closely aligned with Department policies.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)) is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense regarding intelligence, counterintelligence, security, sensitive activities, and other intelligence-related matters. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with USD(I), particularly to ensure the intelligence requirements of Special Operations Forces in the field are met.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, USD (AT&L), is the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all matters relating to the DOD Acquisition System, including procurement; research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E); military construction; and nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs. If confirmed, I will closely coordinate USSOCOM acquisition activities with USD (AT&L) to ensure USSOCOM procurement efforts are closely aligned with Department procurement processes and priorities.

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

ASD (SO/LIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the USD(P) and the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations and low intensity conflict matters. The principal duty of the ASD (SO/LIC) is the overall supervision of Special Operations activities within the Department of Defense, including USSOCOM. As I state in subsequent responses, the USSOCOM Commander works closely with ASD (SO/LIC) in the execution of his “service-like” authorities under 10 U.S.C. section 167.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Assistant Secretary, and with United States European Command, United States Central Command, and United States Africa Command, to ensure the effective employment of Special Operations Forces capability in support of national security objectives in the Europe, the Middle East and Africa. I am particularly interested in continuing the enduring relationship with the NATO Special Operations Forces Headquarters (NATO SOF HQ), and look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary in developing policies in support of NATO SOF HQ.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asian & Pacific Security Affairs

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Assistant Secretary, and with United States Pacific Command, to ensure the effective employment of Special Operations Forces capability in support of national security objectives in the Asian and Pacific regions.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense & Americas’ Security Affairs

If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Assistant Secretary in developing USSOCOM’s role in Homeland Defense, and in support of civil authorities, to determine the Special Operations support necessary to protect the United States and its citizens during domestic emergencies.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary in support of her efforts to develop policy on countering weapons of mass destruction and cyber security issues, two areas of abiding interest for Special Operations Forces.

The Service Secretaries

The USSOCOM Commander's authority over the Service components, and those forces assigned to him, is clear in the Goldwater-Nichols Act, but requires close coordination with the Service Secretaries to ensure that USSOCOM does not intrude upon each Service Secretary's legal responsibilities. Close coordination between the USSOCOM Commander and each of the Service Secretaries is also essential to gaining and maintaining the Services' support of Special Operations Forces with support units from the General Purpose Forces and with service-common materiel.

The Service Chiefs

Without the full support and cooperation of the Service Chiefs, the USSOCOM Commander cannot ensure the preparedness of his assigned forces to execute his assigned missions. The Joint Chiefs are also a source of experience and judgment that every Combatant Commander may call upon. If confirmed, I will continue a full and frank dialog with the Service Chiefs.

The other combatant commanders

Successive USSOCOM Commanders have fostered an atmosphere of teamwork and trust in their relationships with the Combatant Commanders. These relationships have only strengthened over the last 15 years as trans-regional threats have emerged and certainly since USSOCOM has been responsible for synchronizing planning for global operations against terrorist networks. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the other Combatant Commanders to achieve our common objectives against transnational threats and violent extremist organizations. I will be committed to providing the Geographic Combatant Commanders trained and ready Special Operations Forces to support national and theater security objectives.

The Director of the National Counter Terrorism Center

USSOCOM is actively engaged in support of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and has been since it was established after 9/11. USSOCOM also relies upon NCTC estimates and reports in the refinement and synchronization of counterterrorist operations, and will continue to assist NCTC to achieve our common objectives against transnational terrorist threats and violent extremist organizations.

The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

USSOCOM and its subordinate elements are consumers of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) products and analysis. If confirmed, I will ensure that USSOCOM continues to develop interoperable

capabilities so that, when directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, we may work efficiently in close partnership to accomplish our assigned missions.

Major Challenges and Priorities

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

Winning the current fight, including Afghanistan and other areas where SOF is engaged in conflict and instability is an immediate challenge – USSOCOM has forces in danger on an almost daily basis. This will continue to be a major challenge and one which, if confirmed, I will ensure is adequately resourced with trained and ready forces.

Terrorism remains the most present threat to the security of Americans at home and abroad. The growth and expanding influence of trans-regional threats including violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and trans-national organized crime remains a very challenging threat. VEOs have proven themselves highly resilient and adaptable, and less reliant on nation-state sponsors for funding and safe havens. Our Special Operators will be called upon to protect the nation from these threats, and to build the capacity of partners and allies to deny terrorists and violent extremists from the safehavens they need to develop and launch attacks.

As a force provider for SOF, the USSOCOM commander must prepare his forces and sustain a high state of readiness for the full range of conflict and contingency scenarios. So we must balance the steady-state requirements to meet current challenges while preparing for an uncertain future. Doing so effectively requires the right level of resources, and the right approach to sustaining our force.

Managing and preserving SOCOM's Major Force Program-11 funding within the current budget and future budget discussions. At the forefront of this discussion is the recognition that many of the current expenditures are funded by the overseas contingency operations funds. The other part of this challenge includes monitoring and understanding the stress the Service Budgets are facing and the impacts it will have on their ability to meet present and future SOCOM requirements for forces, capabilities and platforms.

None of this can happen if we do not preserve and protect our Special Operations forces and the families that support them. After nearly 13 years of sustained high operational tempo, our people need help with mending their mind, body, and spirit. The nation asks much of our Special Operators and their families, and they have always delivered. Much more will be asked of them, and, if confirmed, I will seek to preserve our most precious asset—our people.

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

I will continue to place my priority on the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) initiative. With the support of Congress, the Department of Defense and the Services I will fully support what Admiral Olsen and Admiral McRaven have started. Aggressively, I will reach out to our SOF families and listen to their concerns to ensure, between the Services and USSOCOM, there are solutions available to meet their needs. One of the key causes of stress for our families is the unpredictability of

training and deployment schedules. To help mitigate this stress and provide families with more predictability, I will continue to support the policy on Personnel Tempo Tracking and enforce the USSOCOM threshold of 250 days at home station (head on pillow) in a 24-month period.

In order to win the current fight, I will place a premium on the organization, training, education, and equipping of our Force as we face new and rapidly growing challenges. SOF's readiness also hinges upon our ability to preserve our force and care for our families.

In order to thwart expanding trans-regional threat networks and VEOs, USSOCOM must outpace the growth of threat networks with friendly networks across cultures. In this vein, we must continue to develop our global SOF network. Investing in our network allows us to share the burden more appropriately. We must engage, not only where problems occur, but also in places critical to our vital national interests where no visible threat currently exists. Success in meeting these challenges demands unprecedented levels of trust, confidence, and understanding built through persistent engagement.

To offset resourcing shortages, while maintaining the best trained and educated force, we must use technology to meet our immediate and long-term challenges. SOF must be internally innovative and take advantage of innovations that could enhance our ability to conduct SOF activities. It is critical that our use of new technology outpaces our adversaries. In this sense, acquisition speed and agility is paramount.

What are the most important lessons you have learned during your tenure in senior leadership positions in the special operations community?

The most important lesson I have learned is the value of open and transparent relationships and communication with all parties who influence the special operations community. Good relationships build trust and understanding and allow for better mutual support of all US Government objectives.

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

As the Commander of Joint Special Operations Command and a member of the USSOCOM and SOF Board of Directors I believe in the Command's current touchstone priorities of preserving the force and families, winning the current fight, strengthening the global SOF network, and responsive resourcing/acquisition. These have served the Command well and will continue to do so in the future.

Civilian Oversight of USSOCOM

The legislation creating USSOCOM assigned extraordinary authority to the Commander to conduct some of the functions of both a military service and a unified combatant command.

Which civilian officials in the Department of Defense (DOD) exercise civilian oversight of the "service-like" authorities of the Commander, USSOCOM?

ASD (SO/LIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) and the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations matters. The principal duty of the

ASD (SO/LIC) is the overall supervision of Special Operations activities within the Department of Defense, including USSOCOM.

USSOCOM also coordinates with the USD(P), USD(AT&L), and Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) on matters within their jurisdiction which touch upon the USSOCOM Commander's "service-like" authorities under 10 U.S.C. section 167. The USSOCOM Commander and his staff works closely with USD(P), USD(AT&L), and the Comptroller, and their staffs, to ensure USSOCOM's programs are aligned with Department of Defense acquisitions policies and are appropriately funded.

In your view, what organizational relationship should exist between the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC) and the Commander, USSOCOM?

There's two sides to this – oversight and advocacy. The ASD (SO/LIC) provides oversight on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, to ensure the USSOCOM Commander and the activities of the Command are aligned to the Department's policies, directives, and regulatory requirements. At the same time, the ASD (SO/LIC), as the Secretary's principal civilian advisor for Special Operations is an advocate for SOF to ensure the views and interests of the USSOCOM Commander are represented in the formulation of policy and allocation of resources within the Department and with Congress.

What should be the role of the ASD SOLIC in preparation and review of Major Force Program 11 and the USSOCOM's Program Objective Memorandum?

ASD (SO/LIC) is directed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense to provide overall supervision of the preparation and justification of Special Operations Forces (SOF) programs and budget; review and approve memoranda of agreement governing the USSOCOM program, budget, and execution process; approve the U.S. Special Operations Command recommendations concerning which programs the USSOCOM Commander will execute directly; review the USSOCOM Program Objectives Memoranda (POM) and budget prior to submission to the Director for Program Analysis and Evaluation and the DOD Comptroller, respectively; and present and defend the SOF program to the Congress, with the advice and assistance of the USSOCOM Commander. I believe these duties describe the appropriate role for ASD (SO/LIC) in oversight and support of USSOCOM.

What is the appropriate role of the ASD SOLIC in the research and development and procurement functions of the USSOCOM?

Working with the USSOCOM Commander and the USSOCOM Acquisition Executive, the ASD (SO/LIC) advises and coordinates with the USD (AT&L), on acquisition priorities and requirements for special operations-peculiar material and equipment. I do not presently recommend any changes to ASD (SO/LIC)'s role in research and development and procurement functions of USSOCOM.

28. What is the appropriate role of the ASD SO/LIC in the operational planning of missions that involve special operations forces, whether the supported command is USSOCOM, a Geographic Combatant Command, or another department or agency of the U.S. Government?

Through his broad policy, coordination and oversight roles as the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations matters, the ASD (SO/LIC) reviews the procedures and provides policy guidance to the USSOCOM Commander on all aspects of Special Operations planning, including contingency planning when directed by the President or Secretary of Defense.

National Security Budget Reductions

The Budget Control Act, as amended by the recent Murray-Ryan budget agreement, calls for reductions in defense spending in excess of \$900 billion.

How do you believe such budget reductions would impact special operations forces?

The Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) will alleviate many of the harshest FY2014 readiness impacts that would have been realized under full sequester, but the standing reductions to the Department of Defense will continue to impact USSOCOM and our enablers. Even with the support of the DoD, USSOCOM has not gone without impact from the BBA. USSOCOM has already reduced all non-essential travel and training, curtailed replenishment of non-mission critical supplies, and reduced Period of Performance (PoP) on all non-severable contracts. The potential decreases in Service end-strength, capabilities, and installation support will also directly affect SOF enablers and potentially affect future Special Operations missions.

The Department of Defense continues to show support for Special Operations by allowing the USSOCOM portion of the FY 2015 President's Budget request to remain approximately level with the FY 2014 President's Budget request in both manpower and resources. This allows USSOCOM to fully meet the nation's most critical requirements as highlighted in the FY2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG) and the FY2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), while still remaining less than 2% of the Department of Defense's top-line budget. With the FY2015 President's Budget request, USSOCOM will be able to limit Continental US (CONUS) based readiness impacts and fully support global operations and deployments in support of the Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs). Continuing to emphasize readiness and focusing on creating competent SOF is imperative to providing a SOF force built to provide a robust range of options for the President and the Secretary of Defense.

Combating Terrorism

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism highlights the need to maintain pressure on al-Qa'ida's core while building the capacity of partners to confront mutual threats. The strategy also underscores the need to augment efforts to counter threats from al-Qa'ida-linked threats "that continue to emerge from beyond its core safe haven in South Asia." The President signed new Policy Guidance on Counterterrorism (CT) on May 22, 2013, that established a framework governing the use of force against terrorists.

What are the roles and responsibilities of the Commander of USSOCOM within the Department's combating terrorism strategy and how would you fulfill such responsibilities if confirmed?

The primary role for the Commander of USSOCOM is to synchronize DoD CT plans and planning efforts. Practical implementation of synchronization occurs throughout the development of the DOD Global CT Campaign Plan (CAMPLAN 7500) and its revisions and in the parallel development of the GCCs' subordinate regional CT plans. Specifically, regional objectives/intermediate military objectives, tailored 7500 Lines of Operation (LOO), and planning and assessment tasks are agreed upon through the Joint Planning Working Groups which are comprised and represented by all GCCs and Functional Combatant Commanders (FCCs) and led by Headquarters USSOCOM.

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

DOD continues to take appropriate steps to expand relationships between the DOD and the Interagency. I want to highlight the superb relationships DoD has built with the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and the Interagency over the past decade. The strong leadership provided by the DNI and the partnerships built with the Intelligence Community has been invaluable for providing coordinated responses to international threat streams as well as defending the homeland. As future threats become more decentralized these relationships and the timely sharing of intelligence will become even more pivotal. The integration of our closest international partners will also prove vital to our ability to disrupt and defeat violent extremism on a global scale. While intelligence sharing and release authority has improved, we must continue to build on this effort.

Al-Qa'ida

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

Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents remain the greatest terrorist threat to the United States and to its national interests around the world. Al-Qa'ida has adeptly exploited the deteriorating geostrategic environments and has expanded its network into every Geographic Combatant Commander's theater of operations, including Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Jabhat al-Nusrah in Syria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia. AQAP continues to present the greatest terrorist threat to the United States Homeland due to their proven capabilities, continued threat planning, and ability to recruit operatives.

The Salafi-jihadist ideology is the common link binding al-Qa'ida, affiliates, and adherents into a transnational brotherhood of believers. The ideology retains its legitimacy within a small portion of the Muslim community because it incorporates a potent mix of anti-Western / anti-Zionist fervor, utopianism, and socio-political grievances into a common narrative, and provides the religious justification for the use of violence in defense of the Muslim nation. Al-Qa'ida's Jihad 2020 grand strategy offers an asymmetric approach to remove U.S. and Western influence from Muslim nations through prolonged engagements of attrition designed to exhaust the political will and financial resources of the U.S.

Afghanistan

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

The security situation in Afghanistan is stable yet tenuous. I remain concerned with high profile attacks, particularly those involving very large vehicle born improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as facilitated by the Haqqani Network. Taliban senior leaders are committed to regaining power following the drawdown of coalition forces and are secure within safe-havens in Pakistan. We expect the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will continue to control major population and economic centers despite the continuance of the Taliban led insurgency. ANSF sustainment will be the greatest mid to long term challenge. I am also concerned with the current political crisis involving voter fraud allegations related to the recent Presidential runoff elections. These allegations could adversely affect the timely, peaceful transfer of power from President Karzai to a successor. A reasonable Afghan political response to pervasive election fraud could lessen chances of violence and avoid widespread ethnic disenfranchisement.

What is your assessment of the current effort to combat terrorism and insurgency in Afghanistan and what changes, if any, would you recommend to strengthen that effort?

As Gen Dunford testified in March of this year, US and Coalition forces have placed constant pressure on the terrorist and insurgent networks operating in and around Afghanistan. At the same time, our significant train, advise, assist (TAA) efforts to develop capable and credible ANSF will ensure that Afghanistan will be able to maintain its own security long-term and prevent the reemergence of safe havens from which Al Qaeda can launch attacks against the US or our allies. We must maintain both of these efforts as long as possible to meet US objectives in the region.

Today, the ANSF are securing Afghanistan with limited to no coalition support. They are taking the brunt of attacks but continue to stand strong against the enemy. This fighting season will be a test of their strength, but their confidence continues to build with each successful security operation. The ANSF's increasing capabilities were recently on international display during the successful execution of two elections. During the run-off election this June, the ANSF led all aspects of security, securing approximately 6,200 polling centers across the country. This was a historic accomplishment.

There is as much reason to be optimistic about the ANSF now as ever, but the situation is not decided. There are areas that we must continue to support in order to close developmental gaps and shortfalls in the ANSF. In order to ensure ANSF longevity, Gen Dunford has re-oriented coalition efforts from combat advising at the unit level to functionally-based security force assistance (SFA). Our advisors are now focused on building Afghan ministerial capacity in planning, programming, budgeting, and acquisition as well as working to improve integration between the different security pillars— army, police, and intelligence – at all levels. In the fielded force, the focus is on further developing critical enabling capabilities such as intelligence, aviation and special operations. These are critical efforts for ANSF's long-term ability to continue the CT and counterinsurgency (COIN) fight. We must continue to provide advisors in support of these efforts for the long-term.

How do you see the role of U.S. Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan evolving as conventional forces continue to draw down and post-2014, assuming a Bilateral Security Agreement is in place?

In line with COMISAF's functionally-based SFA, US and Coalition SOF have adjusted their focus to advising at the ministerial, organizational and institutional level as well as critical enabling capabilities in our Afghan Special Security Force (ASSF) partners – these include aviation, logistics, intelligence and command and control. This will be the primary focus into 2015, pending the signature of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA).

The NATO Special Operations Component Command/Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (NSOCC-A/SOJTF-A) has five Special Operations Advisory Groups (SOAGs) focused on mentoring and advising our ASSF partners at the operational level in order to ensure they have the ability to command, control, maintain and sustain their tactical units spread across the country. These special military and police units are our most capable partners in the CT fight. In order to ensure our ASSF partners continue to take the fight to our enemies, US SOF must be able to continue to do some advising at the tactical level post-2014 with select units in select locations. This will reinforce ASSF capabilities to address the terrorist networks which are the greatest threat to US/Western/GIROA interests.

We must show our continued commitment to Afghan security efforts in order to maintain the mutually beneficial relationships we need to meet US objectives in the region. To do this, SOF will continue to depend on the enabling capabilities and footprint provided by Conventional forces.

Syria

What is your assessment of the security situation in Syria and its impact on the region?

In the past three years the Syrian crisis has descended into a sectarian regional conflict pitting the Assad regime, Lebanese Hizballah and Iran against a mosaic of competing Sunni combatants. The proliferation of armed groups and the opening up of additional fronts in the region, particularly ISIL's control of eastern Syria and western Iraq allows for the free flow of fighters and arms across the border. Left unchecked this situation will continue to fuel sectarian violence and increase instability and humanitarian concerns beyond Syria's border, as observed in Iraq.

What is your assessment of Jabhat al Nusra and other like-minded groups?

Jabhat al-Nusrah, also referred to as al-Nusrah Front (ANF), is al-Qa'ida's newest affiliate in Syria and has rapidly matured as an effective fighting force. ANF is closely connected to multiple Syrian opposition groups and is coordinating operations against the Assad regime. ANF and other extremist groups in Syria are attracting record numbers of foreign fighters and the anticipated backflow of these fighters will present an enduring counterterrorism challenge as al-Qa'ida seeks to conduct external terrorist attacks.

In your view, what is the most appropriate role for the United States military in assisting regional friends and allies respond to the situation in Syria?

I believe the US military can help our regional friends and allies respond to the situation in four key areas. First, we can Build Partner Capacity to better understand the situation on the ground, share intelligence, conduct IO, and enhance border security. We can also develop the network of military-to-military relationships to build a common understanding of the threats and encourage common cause. We should continue our efforts to illuminate the foreign fighter threat and enable our partners to create action to disrupt foreign fighters and the networks that facilitate them. Finally, we could pursue options to provide additional support to strengthen the moderate elements of the Syrian opposition, if authorized and directed.

In your view, what – if any – role should the United States military, including special operations forces, play with respect to the situation in Syria?

In my view the United States military should facilitate interagency and international efforts to disrupt the flow of foreign fighters into and out of Syria and Iraq, facilitate intelligence fusion with partners, and employ authorized methods and resources to better understand the situation inside Syria. We should also help Build Partner Capacity, train and equip vetted opposition units, posture for CT operations, and in concert with DOS conduct a regional IO campaign to reassure our allies, reduce the foreign fighter flow, and reduce support to the extremists.

Iraq

What is your assessment of the current threat posed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)?

ISIL represents the greatest threat to the governments of Iraq and Syria, and threatens to destabilize the entire Levant region by fomenting a sectarian war. ISIL's transnational connections are growing throughout North Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia. The majority of the foreign fighters appear attracted to the success of ISIL and present a growing threat to global security as veteran fighters return to their home countries.

What is your assessment of the capabilities of the Iraqi security forces, including the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Police and the Counterterrorism Services, to respond to the threat posed by ISIL and other security challenges?

The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) are currently unable to expel ISIL and associated opposition groups from areas where they have seized territory and infrastructure. While the ISF is relatively well-equipped there are considerable political challenges that are severely impacting the ISF's strategic direction and operational readiness.

The Iraqi Army faces shortfalls in intelligence, troop mobility and faces logistics problems severely impacting operational maneuver and resupply of munitions. Iraqi Counterterrorism Services have been over-used and miscast as conventional military forces inhibiting their ability to conduct counterterrorism missions. Iraqi police forces have largely capitulated in Sunni dominated regions allowing anti-GOI forces to assume control over the northern and western provinces. Compounding

these problems, the remaining military forces loyal to the government have been withdrawn from border regions and provinces to defend Baghdad.

What in your view are the main “lessons learned” from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn as they pertain to special operations forces?

These operations provided many lessons learned that we have incorporated into our current operations. These lessons include then need for whole of government approaches, active and integrated interagency coordination and collaboration, the necessity for culturally attuned forces, and the need for combined operations. It is critical to maintain enduring partnerships, especially with newly formed military establishments, once our general purposes forces have redeployed. Special Operations forces are uniquely designed to conduct low visibility, small footprint, but high pay-off persistent mil-to-mil engagement with partner nations. These activities contribute to enduring partnerships and enable access and a better understanding of the political landscape and overall threat environment in country. To maintain these relationships and partnerships funding and authorities are crucial.

Yemen and al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula

What is your assessment of the current U.S. strategy in Yemen and what is your understanding of the role of DOD within that strategy?

Yemen is in a strategic location on the Bab El Mandeb strait and is struggling with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and internal threats to stability. The US is Yemen's strongest supporter and is providing support on many levels to strengthen the government and build stability. The DOD is a key element of modernizing the Yemeni military by providing equipment, training and mentorship.

Given the continuing political instability and slow progress of the national dialogue in Yemen, what are your views on the U.S. continuing to provide security training and assistance to Yemeni counterterrorism forces?

The political instability and external threats from Al Qaeda are the reasons we must continue to provide security training and assistance to Yemen. The political and military progress is slow, but the Yemenis continue to move forward. If we are willing to continue providing the support that helps the Yemenis move towards stability Yemen has the potential to be a small but important victory in defeating extremist organizations in the Middle East.

Somalia and Al Shabab

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

Al-Shabaab (AS) is a significant regional threat in East Africa. AS can conduct attacks outside of Somalia and has demonstrated this by launching attacks against regional neighbors in Djibouti, Kenya, and Uganda. AS has proven to be a significant regional threat to Western interests and is striving to extend its reach internationally.

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

Yes, the group has demonstrated the capability to stage complex, high-profile attacks against Western targets outside of Somalia and to harm US citizens abroad. Since 2008 ,Al-Shabaabhas vowed to attack US interests in Somalia and to conduct attacks against the US homeland. The US and Europe host a large diaspora of Somalis, which AS and could recruit, radicalize, and train personnel for attacks against the US or other western interests.

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

U.S. foreign policy objectives in Somalia are to promote political and economic stability, prevent the use of Somalia as a haven for international terrorism, and alleviate the humanitarian crisis caused by years of conflict, drought, flooding, and poor governance. The United States is committed to helping Somalia's government strengthen democratic institutions, improve stability and security, and deliver results for the Somali people. It has urged the Somali leadership to continue to consolidate gains by helping local governance structures emerge through community dialogue and reconciliation, rapidly providing services, and drafting legislation to facilitate implementation of the provisional constitution. The United States also has welcomed the African Union Mission in Somalia's (AMISOM) success in driving the al-Shabaab terrorist organization out of strategically important population centers, and has underscored the continued U.S. commitment through DoD to support AMISOM and the Somali national forces in their responsibility of extending security throughout Somalia.

Should the United States establish military-to-military relations and consider providing assistance to the Somali national military forces?

At the right time we certainly should establish a military-to-military relationship with Somalia. We should look first to resume full diplomatic relations, including establishing a full time presence once security conditions are acceptable. Concurrently the United States should continue its support to Somali National military forces through AMISOM and the Department of State's training program. If the situation continues to improve, I would welcome working with USAFRICOM and the Department of State to determine the best course of action for incorporating Special Operations Forces into this effort.

Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)?

AQIM is a threat to Western and US interests throughout North and West Africa. AQIM's objectives include cleansing North Africa of Western influence; overthrowing apostate governments to include Algeria, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia; and installing fundamentalist regimes that follow strict, Sharia law.

In your view, does AQIM pose a threat to the United States and/or western interests outside of its immediate operational area? What capacity has AQIM demonstrated to plan and carry out actions threatening U.S. interests?

AQIM poses a low threat to the homeland, however, it has the intent and capacity to carry out attacks against US interests throughout North Africa with the greatest threat to U.S. interests being kidnapping for ransom. Although AQIM has not specifically targeted U.S. interests, it has kidnapped 20 Europeans over the last ten years, gaining \$50 million USD in ransom payments.

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 made significant gains during the Tuareg rebellion and subsequent coup in northern Mali in March of 2012; however, these gains and their capacity in northern Mali are being degraded by ongoing French counterterrorism operations and UN stabilization mission.

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 (OOC)?

The objective of Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS, the U.S. military advise and assist mission with AU-RTF forces including the UPDF, DRC and South Sudan, is to better enable African militaries of the region to counter the Lord's Resistance Army, and ultimately to dismantle the LRA and eliminate the threat to the civilian populations of the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. The LRA has waged violent insurgency in the region since the 1980s, manning its army by kidnapping children and forcing them to take up arms against government troops. Since October 2011, joint U.S. and Ugandan operations against the LRA have significantly marginalized the group's activities.

In your view, how can DOD support, particularly SOF support, to OOC be more effective in meeting these objectives?

DoD can best support OOC by continuing to support U.S. Government Strategic Objectives, based on President Obama's Counter-Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) strategy through continued funding and resourcing. To be more effective in achieving these objectives, U.S. SOF C-LRA operations should

focus on increasing UPDF and regional forces' capabilities to counter terrorists and insurgents and increase their range and capability to reach remote areas where the LRA continue to find safe haven and if directed, prepare for a transition of training responsibilities from U.S. SOF to U.S. and/or international and regional partner nation conventional forces. Information operations including leaflet drops, radio broadcasts and loud speaker operations conducted in close coordination with partner nations and regional NGO's have been extremely effective in influencing LRA members to defect, including the recent defection of high level LRA leader Lt Col Opio Sam. These operations have significantly reduced the LRA's capabilities and should be continued, to deplete the LRA's ranks and reintegrate former LRA members. These activities, coupled with conventional and interagency activities, will directly and indirectly contribute to increased protection of civilians in the region, neutralizing the threat from the LRA, promoting the integration/re-integration of former LRA members, and building the international humanitarian relief to affected communities in the region.

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

USSOCOM supports AFRICOM and SOCAFRICA's current persistent engagements and Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS mission in Central Africa, and recognizes that DoD actions are an integral part of the overall U.S. Government approach to achieve national objectives. The current level of support has been successful in significantly marginalizing the LRA through persistent Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) events engagements and advise, assist and accompany missions with UPDF, DRC and South Sudan forces as they counter the LRA. These engagements with the UPDF have resulted in the enhancement of a UPDF conventional forces, South Sudan Commandos and DRC Forces Regionale d'Intervention (FRI) troops, who have clearly demonstrated increased counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency capabilities throughout the region. The pressure applied by U.S.-trained forces has resulted in a large number of defections from the LRA, as well as effective UPDF actions on named objectives throughout the region.

Pakistan

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

As a declared nuclear-weapons state, Pakistan's internal stability is of paramount strategic interest to the United States. Violence associated with insurgent and political attacks have been trending generally downward since national elections in May 2013; however, attacks as of April 2014 are still unacceptably high. As the U.S. draws down in Afghanistan, a more stable Pakistan will contribute to a more peaceful transition in Afghanistan. Regionally, the Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are increasingly important in terms of security and counter-terrorism, the flow of narcotics and other drugs (which fuel corruption and violent extremist groups), and the flow of hydrocarbons. Save for Turkmenistan, the Central Asian States are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (the SCO) – with focus on regional security, military cooperation, and mutual economic interests. Pakistan is an observer nation in the SCO, and a trading partner with all five. How Pakistan interacts with the regional powers of India, China and Russia is of vital strategic interest to the U.S. How the U.S. manages bi-lateral relations with each of these three – India in particular – will influence our relationship with Pakistan.

Does the United States have a strategic interest in enhancing military-to-military relations with Pakistan? Why or why not?

Our primary strategic interest in enhancing military-to-military relations with Pakistan lies in the potential proliferation of nuclear weapons. Pakistan is not a signatory in the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (although is a member in good standing in the IAEA). As a nation of nearly 200 million, 96 percent-Muslim, and 90 percent of those Sunni, northwest Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan remain susceptible to Taliban (Sunni) influence. In parallel, most of the primary components for calcium ammonium nitrate (fertilizer)-based IEDs have originated in or transited through Pakistan over the past 10-12 years. Enhancing mil-to-mil relations would offer more chance of guiding Pakistan in positive directions than not.

If so, what steps would you recommend, if confirmed, for enhancing the military-to-military relationship between the United States and Pakistan?

Around the core of Special Operations Command's warrior diplomats is a unique world of relationships with partner nation Special Operations and conventional forces, government agencies in intelligence, law enforcement, policy and diplomacy, universities, think tanks, private sector enterprises and non-governmental organizations. Our partner nation liaison officers who travel to the U.S. to work with USSOCOM and attend our professional military education programs have the opportunity to interact with many of these organizations, and as a result commonly return to their home countries with a greater sense of trust in U.S. capabilities and intentions. Likewise – our Special Operations Liaison Officers return from overseas assignments with a deeper appreciation of countries and regions to which they are detailed. These exchanges, as well as continuing legacy SOF training missions prove to be of enormous value in breaking down barriers to future communication and understanding.

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

Pakistan has become increasingly cooperative. Pakistan's central government appears to have changed its stance toward militant extremist groups, specifically the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Haqqani Network (HQN), the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Within the last few weeks, Pakistan's military (both air and ground forces) conducted successful missions in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) region of Pakistan in an effort to defeat extremist groups. In addition, Pakistan's populace has been very supportive of its governmental/military efforts, as they have become increasingly frustrated with militants targeting civilians, exacerbated by the recent complex attack on Karachi's airport.

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 has an extremely complex and volatile climate of political, military and industrial relationships and it is understood that dual-use precursors are finding their way into IEDs. While strides have been made to better control production and distribution of materials, more needs to be done to illuminate the networks that provide precursors for the lethal devices. This will require

building trust and identifying the benefits of curbing the shipping of these materials by both military-to-military and diplomatic means to include, perhaps, offering alternative technologies as mitigation.

Republic of the Philippines

What is your view of the effectiveness of U.S. assistance provided through the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines to the military of the Republic of the Philippines in its fight against terrorist groups?

The short answer is that I believe OEF-P, executed through JSOTF-P, has been a text-book example of the effectiveness of the “by, with, and through” strategy.

The effort has employed the full range of military activities – ranging from Direct Action / Kinetic operations to building partner capacity-and utilized numerous capacity building funding authorities.

In the initial years of OEF-P, USSOF worked at the tactical level, actively patrolling and advising the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in operations against ASG and Jemaah Islamiya (JI). After six months of FID operations, JTF-510 completed its mission and redeployed while Special Forces Security Assistance modules continued with a focus on facilitating connections between elements of the AFP and USSOF. JTF-510 was replaced by JSOTF-P, which continued to execute the full range of operations to include advise, train, equip, and civil-military support through building partner capacity venues. The intent of these operations was to go at the heart of the ASG and JI support zones and eliminate their ability to operate by improving government legitimacy, separating terrorists from the populace, and assisting in CT targeting. This method was sustained for nine years. As the AFP skills progressed, USSOF refocused their efforts on operational planning and higher headquarters C2 techniques. Our successes in the Philippines is no doubt based on the full range of operations, actions, and activities with both MoD and MoI forces to include direct action, advise/assist, train, equip, minor construction, ISR, CASEVAC, CMO, CNT, info ops, and aviation support.

Our Philippine partners have now progressed to a point where they can maintain security and stability with minimal advisory support and international ties to ASG and JI have been severed. Within the past year, JSOTF-P elevated their support to the institutional training centers of select Philippine National Police (PNP) and AFP partner units who can now wage the CT fight on their own.

Do you expect the necessity for or mission of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines to change in the coming years? If so, how?

Yes. JSOTF-P will deactivate and the named operation OEF-P will conclude in Fiscal Year 2015. OEF-P and JSOTF-P will transition because of a change in the threat picture, and more importantly, due to the significant enhancement of PSF capabilities. Throughout this transition, our ability to maintain a good rapport with PSF and internal networks built over the past eleven years has been critical to our partnership.

A smaller number of U.S. military personnel operating as part of a PACOM Augmentation Team will continue to improve the abilities of the PSF to conduct their CT missions, build PSF capacity through

long-term SOF partnership, and to partner at critical locations to ensure a level of sustainable competence.

Special Operations Authorities

The current Commander of USSOCOM has sought and received more control over the deployment and utilization of special operations forces. For example, the Secretary of Defense modified policy guidance for the combatant commands that gave USSOCOM, for the first time, responsibility for resourcing, organizing, and providing guidance to the Theater Special Operations Commands of the Geographic Combatant Commanders and special operations forces assigned to them.

Do you believe the Commander of USSOCOM needs additional authorities to optimize the utilization of deployed special operations forces?

No, receiving COCOM of Theater Special Operations Commands enables resourcing, organizing, and guidance supporting Geographic Combatant Commanders while increasing effectiveness of special operations forces assigned to them.

If confirmed, how would you seek to utilize authorities provided to the Commander of USSOCOM without conflicting with civilian control of the military, infringing upon other authorities provided to the Geographic Combatant Commanders, or raising concerns with the State Department.

I'll address each of the three potential conflicts listed above.

I fully understand and will comply with the military chain-of-command, which eliminates conflict with civilian control.

When Special Operations Forces deploy, OPCON is transferred to the GCC who then employs the forces. This clear transfer of control eliminates any conflict with the GCCs.

All of the various events and activities that employ SOF (JCET, CNT, Section 1208, Section 1207, JCS Exercise) require COM concurrence, thereby eliminating any possible conflict with State.

Section 1208 Operations

Section 1208 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 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 is critical to our combating terrorism efforts. It is a force multiplier – allowing a small number of US Special Operators to enlist the support of regular and irregular forces to facilitate US military operations, particularly to access areas where a larger US presence would be counter to our objectives. 1208 authority is ideally aligned to our defense strategy, which calls for small-footprint, distributed operations to counter terrorist threat networks. From a historical perspective, we have achieved tremendous effects across a wide range of operating environments for a fraction of the cost of other programs. 1208 authority fills a critical gap in our ability to train and equip regular and irregular forces in uncertain environments where terrorists thrive and establish sanctuary. I am extremely appreciative of Congress’ continued support for this authority.

The SASC-passed Fiscal Year 2015 NDAA (S. 2410) increased the cap for Section 1208 operations to \$60 million from its current level of \$50 million

What is your view of this proposed increase?

I am encouraged by the SASC’s effort to increase our authority cap as an indicator that we share similar perspectives on 1208. As we transition out of combat operations in Afghanistan and begin to implement the President’s vision of increasing efforts by, with, and through foreign partners to address the expanding threat of terrorism, 1208 authority will become ever more essential. 1208 will be in increasing demand by the combatant commanders as they seek low-cost, small-footprint, discreet SOF elements to carry out enabled partner operations. I also see the need for longevity in the authority – by way of multi-year extensions - and incremental increases in the cap to accommodate expanding requirements so that we are able to meet the current demand and posture ourselves to respond quickly in the event of emerging crises.

Are there any other changes that should be made to 1208 to improve the effectiveness of this authority?

I’m continually impressed with the foresight of those in Congress that wrote 1208 authority, as it continues after nearly 10 years to provide us with tremendous flexibility in supporting our combating terrorism operations, while affording the Department of Defense and Congressional leadership with complete visibility on the program through existing notifications and reporting requirements. I believe that as long as we adhere to the spirit and letter of the law, with careful management and oversight, this authority will continue to serve us well into the future as written.

Department of Defense Counternarcotic Authorities

What is your understanding of the Department of Defense’s counternarcotics authorities?

SOF forces conduct counter narco-terrorism (CNT) training missions under DoD counternarcotics authorities. Known as Section 1004 authority (§1004, of the FY 1991 NDAA), US SOF CNT missions enable foreign partners to develop skills and capabilities to interdict smuggling activities. SOF CNTs address the narco-trafficking and associated transnational criminal organization (TCO) threats in regions such as West Africa, Central America, and the Central Asian States. These are

regions where SOF has a continuous forward presence under CN authority. USSOCOM helps support the Department's Counternarcotics and Global Threats Strategy through conducting CNTs and other activities.

In your view, does USSOCOM benefit from these authorities and associated funding?

Yes. CN authorities and funding enable SOF forces to build partner capacity and enable SOF forward presence in areas threatened by narcotics trafficking. CN authorities and funding also enable the SOF community to perform Counter Threat Finance (CTF) analysis of illicit proceeds of the drug trade.

Would you recommend any changes to the Department of Defense counternarcotics authorities?

I believe current DoD counternarcotics authorities are appropriate, and have proven to be useful tools to accomplish national security objectives. . I would note that because the current authorities are tied to counternarcotics, they do not currently enable DoD to directly support other USG efforts to counter transnational organized crime that lacks a narcotics or terrorist connection

Counter Threat Finance

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. In August 2010, the Department issued a Counter Threat Finance (CTF) Policy Directive which recognized the CTF discipline as an essential tool in combating criminal networks and terrorist organizations and called for the integration of CTF capabilities into future force planning and the continued support to interagency partners conducting CTF operations.

What is your assessment of the value of counter threat finance activities?

Identifying and disrupting the enabling means, specifically the resources of our adversaries, is a critical line of effort to the National Counterterrorism Strategy and the Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime. Counter Threat Finance (CTF) directly supports these objectives through highlighting the illicit activities and vulnerabilities of threat networks. Additionally, financial data is a powerful tool in understanding a network's capabilities and relationships. In this context, CTF activities provide significant value in our efforts to protect the United States and U.S. interests abroad.

What do you believe is the appropriate role, if any, of USSOCOM in supporting counter threat finance activities?

USSOCOM is the DOD lead component for synchronizing transnational DOD CTF activities. In this role, SOCOM is well positioned to support interagency and partner CTF efforts. Our ability to understand our adversaries and advance whole-of-government efforts will remain an important aspect of our enabling role, and will shape our ability to operate effectively alongside and in support of our interagency partners.

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 U.S. National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime is grounded in the increasing threat transnational criminal organizations pose to U.S. and international security and governance. It highlights the threat posed by the convergence of transnational organized criminal activities. Therefore, the Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime centers on efforts to build, balance, and integrate the tools of American power to combat this threat. Depriving threat networks of their enabling means must be integrated into current and future operations, including special operations missions. It takes a network to combat this, and the approach we must take is a whole-of-government networked approach. The Threat Mitigation Working Group led a Strategic Coordination Meeting hosted at USSOCOM to explore this very topic on 09 May 2014. There is still work to be done synchronize our whole-of-government response to CTOC.

What is your understanding of the USSOCOM’s role within the President’s strategy?

USSOCOM is a partner with interagency efforts to:

- Enhance intelligence and information sharing;
 - USSOCOM’s global perspective can provide unique expertise in defining and describing the scope of the threat posed by transnational criminal organizations.
- Strengthen interdiction, investigations, and prosecutions;
 - Special operations forces (SOF) provide unique capabilities in support of the Department of Defense’s detect and monitor responsibilities as outlined in 10 U.S.C. section 124. Additionally, an expansion of the DOD rewards for information program to include transnational organized crime, would permit SOF to provide additional support in gathering information to support arrest or conviction of top transnational criminals.
- Disrupt drug trafficking and its facilitation of other transnational threats; and
 - SOF have a long history in providing support to U.S. government counter-drug activities globally. SOF maintain established relationships with counter-drug partners worldwide and execute sustained counter-drug capacity development missions..
- Build international capacity, cooperation, and partnerships
 - SOF have unique qualifications and capabilities to directly interact with and enhance international partners’ capacity to address the challenges related to transnational organized crime.

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

Yes. Transnational organized crime can destabilize partner nation governments, while also enabling our adversaries. To effectively counter these threats, we need to undertake a comprehensive approach that includes mutually supporting priorities among DoD, other USG departments and law enforcement agencies, and the intelligence community. Furthermore, once the mutually supporting priorities are identified, USSOCOM should continue to develop capabilities and integrate those capabilities into mission planning in support of whole-of government solutions, including working directly with U.S. Law Enforcement agencies.

USSOCOM Acquisition Authorities

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

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

USSOCOM has a robust requirements and programming process that is vetted through the special operations Strategic Planning Process (SPP) and leadership from each of the Component Commands. This disciplined process allows USSOCOM to align available resources with validated requirements, and to prioritize these requirements within our budget and future year programs.

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

USSOCOM prides itself on an acquisition workforce of recognized experts and trusted providers, as well as a rapid and focused acquisition system built on streamlined processes. Although effective, we continue to look for collaborative opportunities and more innovative ways of doing business with the Services, international partners, and the industrial complex.

Some recent examples include open collaborative forums between the SOF operators, acquirers, industry and academia, 3D modeling and prototyping, and various contracting strategies.

What role can USSOCOM's development and acquisition activities play in broader Service and DoD efforts?

USSOCOM is a microcosm of the entire Defense Department, and our challenges are very similar to investment requirements among the Services. USSOCOM also has mature processes to conduct rapid evaluations of technology, systems, and concepts of operations, the results of which benefit SOF and are transferrable to the rest of the Department. Special Operations Forces Acquirers specialize in the integration of emerging off-the-shelf technologies.

This integration allows USSOCOM to take the best from each Service, as well as industry, and modify or customize the equipment to meet special operations needs and rapidly field it to the force. Our success can then be shared with the Services to improve their capabilities.

Some of the SOF technologies that have been transitioned to the Services include the M-3 Multipurpose Anti-Armor, Anti-Personnel Weapons System (MAWS) to the US Army, the MK48 Machinegun to the US Navy, and the LA-10 Hand Held Laser Marker to the US Air Force National Guard.

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

Although USSOCOM generates and validates all SOF requirements, these requirements are provided to the Joint Staff for inclusion in the Joint Requirements Knowledge Management System. In addition, USSOCOM has initiated acquisition summits with OSD, drawing together USSOCOM, USD(AT&L), and the Service Acquisition Executives (SAE) to discuss acquisition issues of common interest. For example, the SAEs regularly synchronize technical and programmatic plans among all investment portfolios, as well as explore initiatives to develop common architectures and standards across different future SOF and Service platforms. Additionally, OSD(AT&L) has led efforts on behalf of SOF to standardize certification and other Service test requirements between Services and USSOCOM to gain efficiencies and promote common process reciprocity. Continuing that dialogue/exchange will remain one of my priorities.

If confirmed, how would you ensure sufficient resources are dedicated to the development of special operations-unique platforms, when required?

Ensuring SOF not only has the resources to conduct today's operations but preparing ourselves for the future environment is one of my top priorities. The USSOCOM Strategic Planning Process (SPP) allows the Command to take a strategic view of future requirements and achieve a balance. Since 9/11, the MFP-11 Budget has kept pace with operations, and the investment funding has allowed USSOCOM to support these increased demands and acquire equipment as required.

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

We have created a series of technology roadmaps that assist us in identifying promising solutions to our problems. These roadmaps are schedule-oriented, containing both the technology development timelines and the formal acquisition program schedules. As such, they have quantifiable metrics (cost, schedule, performance, and technology readiness) embedded in them.

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

The USSOCOM Acquisition Executive manages the SOF Acquisition workforce similar to the Service Acquisition Executives. SOF Acquirers are specialists in Science & Technology, acquisition, contracting, and logistics. They are operationally oriented, professionally trained and certified, and experts in the SOF-unique processes required to meet the equipping needs of SOF. USSOCOM has been recognized as a leader in acquisition workforce development, and has received DoD-level awards in this area for the last three years.

Special Operations Personnel Management

Some have argued that the Commander of USSOCOM should have greater influence on special operations personnel management issues including assignment, promotion, compensation, and retention of special operations forces. One proposal would modify section 167 of title 10, United States Code, to change the role of the USSOCOM Commander from “monitoring” the promotion, retention, and career progression of special operations officers to “coordinating” with the services on personnel and manpower management policies that directly affect special operations forces.

What is your view of this proposal?

In 2010, the Defense Department published DODD 5100.01, Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components, which implemented USSOCOM’s recommendation, specifically citing “coordinate,” vice monitoring as Title 10 states. USSOCOM must continue to work with the Services and ASD (SO/LIC) to ensure the most effective personnel management policies are codified in all applicable directives.

Size of Special Operations Forces

The 2006 and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews mandated significant growth in special operations forces and enablers that directly support their operations. However, as a result of the Budget Control Act and Bipartisan Budget Agreement, USSOCOM will truncate its growth at 69,700 personnel, almost 3,000 fewer than had been previously planned.

What is the impact of these cuts to special operations capabilities – particularly with regard to organic enabling capabilities like combat support and combat service support?

The Budget Control Act and Bipartisan Budget Agreement truncated USSOCOM’s growth by approximately 2,201 personnel. After conducting a detailed analysis, it was determined that primarily USASOC’s end-strength would be affected (specifically three (3) Ranger companies, an MH-47 company of 8 helicopters, and 1 of 2 ISR Gray Eagle companies cut; and a halt in programmed growth of civil affairs capacity), so that cuts to combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS) requirements could be minimized. Additionally, while not specifically reduced, NSW and MARSOC did not realize programmed growth.

Although the cuts were managed to ensure minimal effects on CS/CSS, USSOCOM will need to define its requirements farther in advance, in order to allow the Services to plan for the employment of habitually aligned units in support of SOF. A reduction of our emergent requests and an increase in

habitually aligned Service Provided Capabilities (SPCs) will go a long way to resolve this problem. We remain committed more than ever to working with the Services as part of their Service force generation processes and GFM to ensure the necessary SPCs are programmed for, trained and ready to deploy with SOF to meet operational requirements.

Stress on the Force and Families: FMD POTFF (Dr Neff)

In recent years, special operations forces have experienced higher suicide rates than those in the general purpose forces and continue to face significant numbers of divorces. The current Commander of USSOCOM has focused significant effort and resources on addressing the stress on special operators and their families through the Preservation of the Force and Families initiative.

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

I will continue to place my priority on the Preservation of the Force and Family (POTFF) initiative. With the support of Congress, the Department of Defense and the Services I will fully support what Admiral Olson and Admiral McRaven have started. Aggressively, I will reach out to our SOF families and listen to their concerns to ensure, between the Services and USSOCOM, there are solutions available to meet their needs. One of the key causes of stress for our families is the unpredictability of training and deployment schedules. To help mitigate this stress and provide families with more predictability, I will continue to support the policy on Personnel Tempo Tracking and enforce the USSOCOM threshold of 250 days at home station (head on pillow) in a 24-month period.

Do you believe families of special operators face “special operations-unique” challenges when compared to other military families?

All military families face challenges associated with supporting their service member. A combination of high operational tempo (OPTEMPO), exacting standards for operational proficiency, and mission sensitivity places unique stressors on SOF members and their families. In accordance with President Obama’s Strategic Guidance, this burden will not decrease. I will continue to alleviate the impact of these challenges by working closely with the Services and, where gaps are identified, work with Congress to implement programs geared towards meeting SOF requirements.

SOF members are subject to no-notice recall and immediate deployments without clear end dates which adds unpredictability to the families. SOF members routinely practice high-risk skills and collective training events with personal injury a persistent career factor and added stress on families. A higher degree of operational activity and enemy contact (personally eliminating combatants) brings an increased opportunity for traumatic exposure compared with GPF. Many SOF members are deployed to remote locations without traditional psychological, medical, or religious support. SOF lives within a short-term deployment & training cycle that result in little or no reintegration period with families...we are always at war. Many SOF members work on classified missions which cannot be shared with spouses...this brings added stress on the relationship. SOF spouses endure a greater percentage of parenting duties from high PERSTEMPO. In time the SOF family adapts to the high OPTEMPO, and

then the SOF member retires or moves to a “desk job”, which can bring difficulties in adapting back to a “normal life”.

Recruiting and Retention

How successful have the services been in recruiting and retaining the special operations personnel that are needed?

In today’s operating environment, the demand is much greater for SOF operators who speak various languages and are culturally attuned. Service recruitment efforts face many challenges as selection from the pool of eligible U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents are limited due to medical, educational, or conduct reasons. However, Service recruiting commands, in coordination with SOF Component commands continue to be generally successful in recruiting SOF operators.

Continued support for programs like Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI), has great potential to alleviate some critical strategic language and cultural gaps. Your current and continued support of this program is not only appreciated but vital to ensure future SOF success. Looking forward, the Services’ must increase recruitment for those candidates who will bring ethnic, business, academic, technical and experimental diversity to SOF. Operating in an uncertain global environment requires a broad pool of personnel with deep and diverse global awareness and understanding. It is paramount for Services and USSOCOM to remain receptive and flexible to initiatives which enable the recruitment of these types of individuals.

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

Past focus groups identified a primary reason personnel consider leaving the force is the lack of predictability for deployments to both named operations and to GCC theater security cooperation program missions. Specifically, this is often created by late shifts in deployment schedules and the insertion of new requirements. In order to address this challenge, USSOCOM recently implemented a Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) tracking policy that establishes a 250 days at home station (head on pillow) threshold in a 24-month period (730 days) with a 12 months back and 12 months forward sliding scale. Any waivers must be personally approved by the USSOCOM Commander.

What steps need to be taken, in your view, to meet the recruiting and retention goals of each of the services’ special operations forces?

The Services need increased flexibility to incentivize qualified individuals to choose the path to become special operators. We need continued support for programs that are beneficial to SOF and also in maintaining recruiting budgets for the Services. Consequently, USSOCOM must continue to facilitate comprehensive solutions and engagement with our Components and the Services to ensure the SOF community is attracting the very best. We must also retain those SOF Operators who demonstrate future potential service to their respective Service.

What monetary or non-monetary incentives do you believe would be most effective in this regard?

USSOCOM currently has a set of recruiting and retention incentive programs focused on accessing new personnel, keeping both our mid-career SOF personnel as well as maintaining our most senior and experienced SOF personnel: Enlistment Bonus (EB), Selective Reenlistment Bonus (CSRB), Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB), Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP), Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) and Critical Skills Accession Bonus (CSAB). These programs have been effective in accessing and retaining their target demographic. USSOCOM will continue to advocate for the SOF Service Components, via OSD and the Joint Staff, with the Services in order to maintain these important SOF incentives programs.

Training Capability

What capabilities do you consider most important for effective training of special operations personnel?

Professional Military Education remains an essential element to the development, sustainment, and advancement of SOF. Additionally, language skills and cultural knowledge continue to be key to establishing effective relationships with foreign forces, organizations and individuals with which SOF will interact.

Training, such as JCETs, Realistic Military Training off Federal property (RMT), and operational exercises are critical in maintaining SOF core capabilities. JCETs fulfill critical Language, Regional Expertise, and Cultural (LREC) training requirements, and at the same time they build person-to-person and unit-to-unit relationships, and contribute towards persistent engagement with partner nations. RMT provides environments that replicate those encountered in actual operations that may not be available in the size or desired level of realism on federal property. Further, these exercises are a great opportunity to enhance inter-agency relationships.

Operational exercises rehearse mission essential tasks that are critical across the spectrum of conflict. From an aviation perspective, this includes the frequency, volume, and quality of training to maintain currency, proficiency, and expertise across a variety of tactical skillsets from aircrew primary and advanced flight skills to Joint Terminal Attack Controller qualifications to culturally-attuned Combat Aviation Advisors. This consists of, among other things, access to appropriate ranges, airspace and the ability to operate off real federal property to effectively replicate operational requirements. SOF is conducting engagements and building partner capacity in several countries with a wide-array of aviation platforms, many of which are not in the DoD inventory, which require our forces to continually expand and refine their knowledge and expertise of aviation platforms and their capabilities.

What improvements are necessary, in your view, to enhance training for special operations personnel?

USSOCOM must continue the re-framing of the force from a primarily threat-focused approach to a population-centric approach. To achieve U.S. strategic objectives, we must continue to posture for and execute an approach based on population-centric engagement.

The continued use of technology has resulted in tangible tactical benefits to the force. For instance, USSOCOM's acquisition of the latest Simulation-Based Training devices has provided an alternative or complementary method to conduct SOF training. This training uses virtual environments to augment or replace portions of the real environment, reducing risk to the participants and potentially reduce overall training costs. The use of these simulations at home stations will reduce the requirement to travel to train thus reducing time away from home and shortening training timelines.

What are the most significant challenges in achieving effective training of special operations personnel?

Access to and availability of Service training areas and ranges in proximity to SOF home bases continue to be a challenge. While there are excellent joint training areas in CONUS, the resources required to access these areas and limited range scheduling availability create additional strain on training time, training budgets, and PERSTEMPO. Given SOF's normal OPTEMPO and un-forecasted mission requirements, SOF requires priority over General Purpose Forces at Service and joint training installations.

From a Presentation of the Force perspective, pre-mission and pre-deployment training with relevant Service-Provided Capabilities (SPCs) is critical. SOF utilizes SPCs to travels to and participate in training at various venues. Coordinating available transportation and training assets with non-prioritized scheduling is difficult and creates delays in training and inefficient use of training resources. The lack of available CONUS-based fixed and rotary/tilt wing platforms presents a significant challenge to train in the spectrum of SOF required capabilities.

What, if any, training benefits accrue to U.S. special operations forces from training foreign military personnel?

SOF conducting training in regional synchronization, intelligence sharing, planning and coordination for counter-terrorism related operations are invaluable tools for improving the language and cultural expertise of U.S. Special Operations Forces while providing opportunities to practice skills needed to conduct a variety of missions, including foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, and counterterrorism. The training of foreign military forces also facilitates more persistent and enduring engagement with partner nation security forces building relationships, trust and interoperability with our global SOF partners.

To what extent, in your view, is it appropriate for the United States to rely upon contractors for training foreign military personnel? What do you see as the primary risks and advantages in such contractor training?

Training of foreign forces, as a general rule, must be conducted as a part of the Department of State Title 22 funded Security Assistance or Security Cooperation programs. SOF support to these programs usually does not include the use of contracted personnel. The use of contractors in many cases may make sense from a cost perspective, as well as relieving military assets from these tasks. The risk to SOF in using contracted personnel is the possible disclosure of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) which SOF has developed based on our battlefield successes. SOF reviews contracts for training to foreign forces to ensure TTPs are protected from disclosure. The problem is trying to

monitor contracted training that is being done by other countries for foreign forces. Frequently, former U.S. Military personnel accept employment with one of 46 foreign companies that conduct SOF training. It is very difficult to monitor disclosure in these cases. Contractors are not a SOF substitute. They should only be used in a support role such as logistics and administration. Contractors operating separate or leading the training of foreign forces may not represent SOF in the best light and cannot represent the U.S. Government. The advantages are they free up SOF from routine logistical and administrative support functions and allow them to concentrate on operational mission accomplishments.

Diversity in SOCOM

How do you define diversity in SOCOM?

SOCOM's definition of diversity includes the traditional categories of minority representation and more. The ability to speak foreign languages, blend into foreign environments, and understand the local cultures of our operating regions are invaluable skills which create a broader, operation-specific diversity in SOCOM.

Do you believe that achieving greater diversity in SOCOM is a priority?

Diversity is absolutely a priority for SOCOM and for subordinate SOF units. Having people on the team from diverse backgrounds only makes the team as a whole stronger. Specifically, diversity is operationally necessary for SOF as SOF engagements continue to expand across populations with different cultural nuances. SOF success is impacted by our ability to assess and adapt on multiple fronts, and benefit from those that possess a broad range of skills and backgrounds.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that continued progress toward diversity goals is achieved without violating reverse discrimination principles of law?

If confirmed, I will work with my Component Commanders, Senior DOD leadership and the Services to identify future operational requirements and support diversity marketing, awareness, and outreach to meet those operational requirements. In addition, senior SOCOM leaders are putting a focus on increasing cultural and ethnic diversity.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

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

The military services have primary responsibility to ensure sexual assault response personnel (Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, medical and mental health providers, and criminal investigation personnel) are well-trained to support victims and investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. If resources are not readily available where the alleged incident occurred, victims are transported to a facility where there is appropriate victim advocate support, medical and psychological care (regardless of service) and investigative/legal support.

The Joint Staff remains a key partner with the Services and OSD in the campaign against sexual assault. Additionally, the Joint Staff works closely with the Combatant Commands during the development of operational plans and personnel policy guidance to ensure the prevention and response to incidents of sexual assault is addressed.

Prevention of sexual assault is a leadership responsibility. Commanders at all levels must remain committed to eliminating sexual assault within our forces by sustaining robust prevention and response policies; by providing thorough and effective training to all assigned service members, by identifying and eliminating barriers to reporting; and by ensuring care is available and accessible.

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

Yes. For a multitude of reasons, sexual assault has historically been an under-reported crime. Restricted reporting has been effective. Although the use of restricted, or confidential, reporting doesn't allow law enforcement to investigate alleged assaults, it does allow a sexual assault victim to confidentially receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigation process.

Unrestricted reporting supports a sexual assault victim who desires medical treatment and counseling—but also provides for official investigation of his or her allegations by law enforcement with the support of the victim's chain of command or Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC).

As our military members' confidence in the reporting and investigative policies and procedures improve as well as the implementation of the victim's attorney programs (ie. the Air Force Special Victim's Counsel) over the past 18 months, I believe and certainly hope that increasing progress is being made in the effort to increase unrestricted reports and victim cooperation during investigations/prosecutions. This will ultimately increase offender accountability.

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

The services are responsible for training sexual assault response personnel to ensure they are well-trained to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. The services have been trying to increase the number of Victim Advocates to support special operators who are deployed to more remote locations. Improved training for investigators is also a priority and this includes investigative resources in deployed areas. As you may imagine, deployed operations and the combat environment are very dynamic and investigative resources are often strained by other mission requirements. Remoteness of locations, availability of transportation, or the level of ongoing operations may complicate access to resources. I believe the DOD training network in place now prepares investigators to handle sexual assault cases in a caring, responsive, and professional manner. Our ability to respond and support victims is critical.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

In January 2013, the Department 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 and USSOCOM 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, will you ensure that the standards are realistic and preserve, or enhance, military readiness and mission capability?

Yes. Our success requires a highly qualified, talented and motivated special operations force. Our standards are a reflection of the challenges we face every day, on and off the battlefield, and are the hallmark of our organization. I view the process of developing and validating standards as an opportunity to ensure our standards are operationally relevant to current and future special operations.

Do you believe that decisions to open positions should be based on bona fide military requirements? If so, what steps would you take to ensure that such decisions are made on this basis?

Our highest priority and most important responsibility is national security. We must remain uncompromising in this regard when making decisions on assignment of personnel to all positions and occupations. History shows diversity enhances capability and will continue to be an integral part of SOF as we face future challenges. The standards validation process will ensure our forces are properly selected and trained to meet the demands for specific occupations and military requirements.

Do you anticipate USSOCOM or its components will need to recommend to a parent service that the service seek an exception to the policy to keep any of its units or occupations all male?

The recommendation for exceptions to policy, in coordination with the recommendations of the Services, will be informed by the validation of occupational standards and USSOCOM's studies of morale, cohesion and unit readiness. These efforts are ongoing. Without these results, it is premature to anticipate exceptions to policy.

Language and Cultural Awareness Capabilities

Deployed special operations personnel remain heavily concentrated in the Central Command area of operations, including many who have been deployed outside of their regional area of expertise.

Are you concerned that the language and cultural skills among special operations forces are being degraded because of repeated deployments outside their regional area of expertise?

While this remains a concern in the near term, the number of operators being deployed outside their regional area of expertise is decreasing and more of our language and cultural awareness training has

been committed to improving our global capabilities. Despite repeated deployments to the Central Command area of operations, USSOCOM's gross language capacity and capability are higher than they have ever been in the past 10 years. However, we need to finish rebalancing specific language densities by operational unit to better serve all Geographic Combatant Commands. Additionally, based on our assessment of the global operational environment, we must maintain our efforts to improve in language capabilities needed to develop our foreign partners.

If so and if confirmed, what, if anything, would you do to ensure these unique skills are adequately maintained?

Effectively enabling our foreign partners and allies to address internal threats mandates that USSOCOM training, mentoring, and coordination efforts are directed at planning, intelligence, and other topics well beyond the simple mechanics of teaching rifle marksmanship. This means we must increase our intermediate and higher level capacities. To address this, we will continue our partnership with the Department and the Services on related issues and increase efforts within the Service SOF Components. USSOCOM works closely with the Department and the Services to optimize and increase diversity recruiting efforts, such as the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) pilot program which brings advanced language and cultural capability into SOF and SOF enabler specialties at low or no cost. We also count on the Services for testing capacity and incentive pays. Both are necessary components of our overall language program.

Rebalancing our language capabilities and continuing to develop the necessary higher proficiencies means strengthening our Service SOF language and culture instruction programs, and monitoring them closely to ensure efficiencies without sacrificing critical capabilities. We will also work with the Service SOF Components and Services to optimize career management that capitalizes on initial training and increases capability through work-related exposure.

Special Operations Missions

In recent years, special operations forces have taken on an expanded role in a number of areas important to countering violent extremist organizations, including those related to information and military intelligence operations. Some have advocated significant changes to USSOCOM's Title 10 missions to make them better reflect the activities special operations forces are carrying out around the world.

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

USSOCOM and SOF senior leaders are in a constant process of reviewing and prioritizing SOF core activities as outlined in DOD Directive 5100.01. This process encapsulates reviewing current directives and capabilities, as well as studying the ever-changing global environment in order to provide feedback to re-shape future directives. This process is reported in updates to the Directive and other key documents. USSOCOM will continue to prepare SOF as directed.

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

USSOCOM and SOF senior leaders are in a constant process of reviewing and prioritizing SOF core activities as outlined in DOD Directive 5100.01. This process encapsulates reviewing current directives and capabilities, as well as studying the ever-changing global environment in order to provide feedback to re-shape future directives. This process is reported in updates to the Directive and other key documents. USSOCOM will continue to prepare SOF as directed.

Military Intelligence Operations

In your view, how are intelligence operations carried out by special operations personnel different from those carried out by others in the intelligence community?

At the Tactical level intelligence support to SOF operations focuses on sustaining the Find, Fix, Finish, Exploit, Analyze (F3EA) intelligence cycle that has been tailored to meet the requirements of speed and flexibility associated with SOF operations. At the Operational and Strategic levels intelligence operations carried out by special operations personnel focus more on developing and incorporating tailored intelligence products to support SOF unique mission sets. SOF intelligence support is different than that provided by the rest of the intelligence community because it provides tailored intelligence analysis supporting Unconventional Warfare planning and operations, uniquely builds detailed diplomatic facility diagrams and models to support SOF NEO or threat based contingency planning, and produces focused analytical products in support of SOF persistent engagement activities with ethnic groups, tribes, or micro-populations, a mission set that is uniquely SOF in duration and focus.

If confirmed, how would you ensure intelligence activities carried out by special operations forces are coordinated adequately with other activities carried out by those in the intelligence community?

USSOCOM will continue to follow all applicable intelligence community directives, will report required sensitive activities to the USD(I), and will maintain the robust intelligence oversight processes in place involving our Inspector General, Staff Judge Advocate, and our Command Oversight Review Board. I intend to maintain and build upon the relationships developed over time with the various federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies represented in our Interagency Task Force in Tampa. Additionally, USSOCOM will continue to employ and leverage our liaison officers, which we call Special Operations Support Team members, in order to coordinate with agencies in the NCR. Interagency collaboration is a significant contributing factor in many of our operational successes.

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?

Title 50 of the US Code, also known as the National Security Act of 1947 does not specifically grant to the Commander of USSOCOM the authority to conduct intelligence operations. However, Title 50 contains many of SECDEF's intelligence statutory authorities which provide SECDEF a basis to direct USSOCOM assets to conduct operations or allow him to delegate authority to the Commander of USSOCOM. The authorities are either broadly delegated such as Defense HUMINT Executor authority, or narrowly tasked through orders such as Title 10 EXORDS. Recognizing the need to fuse

the military's need for tactical and strategic intelligence with the policy need for political and strategic intelligence, Title 50 bifurcates the responsibilities for the intelligence function between SECDEF and DNI.

Special Operations Personnel in Embassies

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

If confirmed, how would you seek to ensure the goals of special operations personnel deployed to these countries are aligned closely with those of the Ambassadors they are working with?

Essential to the success of the efforts you describe is absolute commitment to ensuring the goals of the Ambassador, the GCC and any deployed SOF are one in the same, at all times. I completely concur deployed SOF's mission is to support the priorities of the Ambassador and SOF does nothing without the express approval of the US Ambassador/Chief of Mission to that country. In the case of Section 1208 authority, we must gain written concurrence from the U.S. chief of mission prior to the application of that authority in support of our operations.

In certain countries, Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLOs) provide additional coordination. SOLOs are USSOCOM-sourced, U.S. SOF-qualified officers, placed under Chief of Mission authority as part of the Embassy Team, via an U.S. Ambassador (USAMB)-approved NSDD-38 agreement. These are permanent change of station assignments where the duties and responsibilities of the SOLO are derived from the USAMB's Integrated Country Strategy and consistent with the GCC's Theater Security Cooperation Plan. There are currently fourteen serving SOLOs (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, France, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Poland, Peru, Turkey, United Kingdom). The program is funded for 40 positions by 2019 at locations based on GCC-identified requirements and USAMB concurrence via the NSDD-38 process.

Since 2007, the program has been highly successful in developing key SOF partners, preparing for future contingencies, and building mutually beneficial global relationships in support of U.S. Embassy, Geographic Combatant Command and Theater Special Operation Command engagement strategies. With a very small footprint, SOLOs enable U.S. Embassies to provide their host nation Special Operations Forces with a more efficient relationship with the U.S. interagency, GCCs, and USSOCOM on SOF specific issues. Additionally, the existing network of SOLOs facilitates coordination between U.S. SOF leadership and strategic partner nation SOF globally.

In your view, what is the value of these special operations personnel to their respective Geographic Combatant Commands and the country teams they are supporting?

U.S. SOF brings unique capabilities to further U.S. policy, goals, and regional/country objectives. We do this in coordination with our interagency partners from across the U.S. Government, ensuring a synchronized whole of government approach. As such, U.S. SOF have become an integral part of every GCC TCP.

Information Operations

The Government Accountability Office reports that DOD has “spent hundreds of millions of dollars each year” to support its information operations outreach activities. Many of these programs are in support of operations in Afghanistan, but Military Information Support Teams (MISTs) from USSOCOM also deploy to U.S. embassies in countries of particular interest around the globe to bolster the efforts of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Further, the Geographic Combatant Commands are increasingly moving into this operational space.

What are your views on DOD’s military information support operations and influence programs and their integration into overall U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Military Information Support Operations are a key capability that DOD provides in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives. USSOCOM provides Military Information Support Operations or MISO forces to Geographic Combatant Commanders in support of specific military objectives within their assigned AORs. Given the breadth and depth of the information environment coupled with Violent Extremist Organizations’ unhindered access and use of it, we believe DOD must be engaged in this aspect of the fight.

USSOCOM is aware of the varying roles and missions of other USG agencies in the information realm, and through close coordination and focused planning, have been successful in executing mutually supportive operations. MISO activities are closely coordinated with the Department of State and are complementary to and supportive of US foreign policy objectives, but do not address US foreign policy directly. DOD maintains unique capabilities to reach audiences in denied areas and to disseminate information in ways that support not only our military objectives, but contribute to U.S. Government communication and engagement strategies.

The fiscal constraints of conducting large scale, DOD operations across the globe, combined with the rapidly evolving information environment, make small MISO teams a vital capability in achieving national security objectives.

What is the role of DOD versus the intelligence community and the State Department?

DOD MISO teams provide unique capabilities which can support the entire USG information and influence efforts worldwide. They continue to be one of the most deployed SOF capabilities. An important process in developing MISO influence messaging is understanding the operational environment and the audiences’ perspective. MISO teams maintain awareness of the information environment by identifying current trends in local and regional media reporting, identifying hostile messaging, and measuring local populace reaction. DOD works in a concerted effort with the intelligence community and the State Department in a whole of government approach to achieve national security objectives.

How do you believe the success of these programs should be measured, especially in light of the constrained budget environment?

Evaluating the success of MISO programs requires time and access in order to collect, process, analyze, and understand the changes in attitudes, perceptions and behavior. The efficient and appropriate evaluation of MISO programs relies on the integration and consideration of assessment early in the planning process and throughout the program's execution. It requires strategic patience in order to give influence programs time to show effects.

Civil Affairs Operations

Civil affairs activities carried out by U.S. Special Operations Forces in partnership with host nation personnel play an important role in developing infrastructure, supporting good governance and civil societies, and providing humanitarian assistance, including medical and veterinary services to needy populations.

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

The demand for civil affairs teams continues to increase, even as they are one of the most deployed DoD capabilities. Even with the drawdown in Afghanistan, the GCC and Embassies demand for civil affairs doubles that of our current and expected capacity. As highlighted in an earlier response, our civil affairs growth programed in the 2006 and 2010 QDRs were halted as a result of the BCA and BBA. This has resulted in a prioritization of allocation and assumption of risk to support the increasing demands of the GCCs.

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

USSOCOM Civil Affairs activities are deeply integrated into the planning and operations conducted within Embassy country teams. We are currently embedded in country teams at over 25 embassies across the globe, supporting the Chief of Mission in achieving specific effects within their country strategy.

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

The key to achieving maximum impact is a fully integrated and collaborative environment. Maintaining the ability to forward deploy both our CA and MISO capabilities, as well as others, in the same location within the TSOC or US Embassy is critical to ensuring proper planning, coordination, de-confliction and execution in support of GCC and CoM objectives and strategies.

Capabilities of Special Operations Forces and General Purpose Forces

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

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

Are there certain mission areas that should be reserved for special operations forces only?

Missions involving the Title 10 SOF Core Activities include: Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, and Unconventional Warfare. These missions are highly specialized requiring extensive mental and physical training and a high degree of risk that the personnel conducting these missions accept. However, other agencies in the U.S. Government are also specialized in some of these missions particularly, Counterterrorism and Counter Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. SOF needs to partner closely with them in the conduct of these operations. Additionally, SOF is best suited for politically sensitive environments, where an overt large U.S. presence is unacceptable to the host nation's government, and to denied environments.

Special Operations Enabling Capabilities

While USSOCOM maintains organic enabling capabilities to support short duration missions, most special operations missions require enabling capabilities provided by the services to be successful.

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

USSOCOM and its components have limited enabling capabilities, especially in the Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) organizations in our Component force structure. This was by design. Our CS/CSS force structure is dedicated to providing direct support to our special operations forces, primarily for short duration missions, often in remote austere locations supporting small unit operations distributed over large distances in the battle space. We rely upon the Theater Combatant Commands and their Service Components to provide SOF the theater level support for persistent SOF enabler requirements. That is precisely why we reiterate the importance of the 5th SOF Truth—"Most Special Operations require non-SOF support. When USSOCOM was established by Title 10, Section 167, U.S.C. there was never the intent by Congress for USSOCOM to fully replicate the enabler support provided by the Services and other strategic partners. In joint doctrine, common user logistics support was intended as a core responsibility of the Services.

USSOCOM and the Services must work in concert, sharing responsibility for providing Combat Support and Combat Service Support enabling capabilities for SOF missions. USSOCOM's responsibility is to continue providing end strength for these conventional forces that serve as organic SOF enablers. USSOCOM is also responsible to support the GCCs, via the TSOCs, in synchronizing demand signals to the Services in order to get these enablers for SOF missions. Based on these inputs

Services can continue to recruit and train these crucial enablers in quantities sufficient to cover requirements for SOF and the Services. Because SOF relies on the Services for Combat Service Support, any lack of these enabling capabilities significantly limits SOF's ability to sustain operations.

In light of current budget pressures, do you believe USSOCOM and the services are maintaining adequate enabling capabilities to support special operations missions?

USSOCOM is maintaining adequate organic capabilities to provide direct support to special operations missions. However, I am concerned that with the significant budget constraints and drawdowns that are being imposed upon the Services in their manpower, equipment, readiness accounts which is degrading the enabling capabilities that they can provide to USSOCOM. These degradations of enabler capabilities provided to USSOCOM by the Services to conduct operations in support of the Geographic Combatant Commanders represent high risk to support persistent distributed SOF operations in remote austere locations against increasingly sophisticated enemy networks and terrorist organizations.

What enabling capabilities are in short supply or at greatest risk with current budget constraints?

Shortages of enabling capabilities for SOF are often similar to shortages in the rest of the deployed force. SOF faces challenges in ISR, C4I, Theater-level logistics forces, intra-theater airlift, medical, combat engineering support to GCCs, operational contracting support (OCS). SOF manning shortages exist in many of our own critical skills and key enablers.

These manning shortages would be exacerbated by a slowdown or reduction in Service provided training due to budget constraints. SOF also relies on Service provided enablers for both initial and currency training (such as fixed wing close air support for Joint Terminal Attack Controllers) as well as forward deployed operations (such as Base Operating Support). These types of enablers are essential for SOF to perform their global missions with a ready and well trained force. USSOCOM must continue to work with the Services in assessing future demand and adjusting programmed force structure.

Render Safe Proficiency

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a growing and especially concerning threat to our nation. Select special operations units are assigned the task of interdicting and rendering-safe weapons of mass destruction should they ever fall into the wrong hands.

If confirmed, how would you ensure render-safe capabilities are adequately maintained by special operations units who may currently be heavily engaged in offensive kill/capture missions against high value targets in Afghanistan and elsewhere?

Currently, our capabilities are adequately maintained by special operations units. I will continue to use the current training and exercise programs in place. Special operations units participate in the Joint Operational Readiness and Training (JORTS) Cycle that incorporates world-wide deployments, individual training, collective training, and joint exercises (and evaluations) year round.

Do you believe additional render-safe capabilities are needed within USSOCOM?

Yes, but allow me to qualify that answer. As I stated before - our capabilities, training and exercises are on track. We are abreast of the latest's threats. However we cannot rest. We must stay in front of the evolving threat through our research and development (R&D) programs. I am grateful for what we have, but as with any program, we are limited by funding. Increased funding for our R&D programs could potentially enhance our current capabilities within USSOCOM.

Supported Combatant Command

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

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

In my opinion, the opportunity for USSOCOM to conduct operations as a supported combatant command is limited to commitment of the National Mission Force. I do not anticipate circumstances where USSOCOM would conduct operations as a supported combatant command outside of CONUS vice transferring operational control of special operations forces to respective GCC Commanders for execution.

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

As a supporting combatant commander, USSOCOM recently received COCOM of the TSOCs. This organizational change has allowed USSOCOM to better support GCC requirements. USSOCOM as a Joint Force Provider will continue to organize, train and equip Special Operations Forces to the highest level in this supporting role.

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 requirement to have an interagency approach is well understood. We have learned that combating terrorism requires capabilities and expertise beyond those of any single agency. We should continue to integrate the elements of national power by leveraging each agency's core competencies. This requires knowing each agency's culture, method of operation and strength. Another critical lesson is to provide

the right number, seniority, and skill sets of personnel from the various agencies. The common denominator is knowledge across the interagency.

Our ability to rapidly share information and intelligence in order to fully “see” our adversaries and subsequently, to take action against them with the most appropriate capabilities within the US Government (USG), is an important lesson learned from Afghanistan.

Additionally, we must ensure that we maintain strong relationships with operational and ministerial leaders following the conclusion of combat operations. Continued TAA efforts aimed at senior leaders across the IA will ensure the progress made endures.

We have learned a great deal over the last decade about the strength of collaboration. The organizational innovation of forming small task forces of subject matter experts from across the military, government, and partner nations allowed SOF in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere to synchronize efforts with an efficient agility. These task forces all follow three simple principles: the practice of flattened, agile communications, extensive senior leader involvement across the U.S. government and allies, and the leveraging of information dominance provided by these subject matter experts and their systems. These principles are our most important lessons learned.

How do you believe these efforts can be improved?

The continued exchange of personnel across agencies, departments and services to build trust and interoperability before a crisis happens is critical to maintaining the cultural of cooperation across the USG which has formed in the warzones over the last decade. We can improve doctrine based on lessons learned from our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, continue to emphasize education across all government departments and agencies, continue to work toward a flatter, more agile communications enterprise, and extend senior leader involvement across the U.S. government and allies. It is crucial that the right people are in place to achieve effective unity of effort to achieve the desired end state.

Should these informal and ad hoc arrangements be made more formal (i.e. through legislation, DOD Directives or Instructions, etc...) or is their ad hoc nature the reason for their success?

There would be benefit to formalizing some aspects of these arrangements in order to prevent the loss of the cooperation that has grown out of necessity in the crucible of conflict. We must ensure that our personnel systems and agency/service/department cultures reward, not discourage (either formally or informally), cooperation and the assignments that support it. We should continue to develop a more formal full-time interagency arrangement to achieve greater coordination and integration of diverse policies during an operational deployment. The challenge is to ensure that any formalization retains enough flexibility to adjust to the nature of the crisis or challenge.

USSOCOM continues to seek ways and means for increasing success in interventions through more formal interagency collaboration mechanisms. As part of that effort, USSOCOM’s Special Operations Support Teams work directly with and in our interagency partners, greatly facilitating intelligence sharing, operations, decision making and keeping lines of communication open. Our Interagency partners in turn have sent their LNOs to SOF organizations at the strategic and operational levels.

We're on the right track with doctrinal publications such as Joint Pub 3-08, "Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations." Capturing the best practices of these horizontal interagency teams in future editions is critical.

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?

USSOCOM maintains persistent engagement and collaboration with individual Country Teams through the TSOCS and through the USSOCOM Special Operations Liaison Officers (SOLOs) which are placed under Chief of Mission authority as part of the Country Team via the NSDD-38.

In addition, the Department of Defense authorized the establishment of the USSOCOM Interagency Partnership Program (IAPP) in 2006, which placed liaison teams known as Special Operations Support Teams (SOSTs) within Interagency headquarters to provide the strategic linkages necessary to ensure collaboration on regional and functional strategies within our partner Agencies and Departments. This program continues to allow USSOCOM to provide senior experienced SOF personnel to our Interagency partners and provides linkages from the Strategic Level in Washington DC, to the Operational Level in conjunction with the TSOCS and their relationships with the Country Teams, to the tactical level through the various forward commands and Task Forces. The IAPP has been instrumental in flattening coordination among our SOSTs, our Interagency partners' headquarters and regional or functional divisions within those headquarters, and our operational and tactical level special operations headquarters and personnel.

Detainee Treatment Policy

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. Common Article 3, found in each of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, provides a baseline of humanitarian principles that are to be applied in all armed conflicts, no matter how they might be described or characterized. I support the Deputy Secretary of Defense 2006 memorandum directing US forces to adhere to the principles of Common Article 3.

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 September 5, 2006?

Yes.

If confirmed, would you ensure that special operations forces comply with the standards in the Army Field Manual, the DoD Directive, and applicable requirements of U.S. and international law regarding detention and interrogation operations?

Yes. I fully support these standards and will ensure that our publications and training reflect these standards. I will also ensure that operational plans and orders, and the execution of those plans and orders, are consistent with these standards. I will hold those who fail to follow the standard accountable for their actions. Prompt investigations into allegations of abuse and swift action are keys to ensuring strict compliance.

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?

Humane treatment of detainees is the right thing to do legally, morally, and ethically. We should endeavor to treat enemy personnel in our custody in a manner that we would want our own U.S. forces to be treated. Reciprocity may be interpreted as justification to condone abuse if U.S. detainees are being abused. I do not agree that enemy abuse of U.S. detainees dictates like treatment on our part. I do believe that if my forces provide humane treatment to those in our custody, there is a greater likelihood that our forces in the custody of our enemy may enjoy some greater degree of humane treatment as a result.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes