

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Dr. Celeste Ann Wallander
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

Duties and Qualifications

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD(ISA)) is the principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Secretary of Defense on international security strategy and policy on issues of Defense Department interest that relate to the nations and international organizations of Europe (including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russia), the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere, and their governments and defense establishments; and for oversight of security cooperation programs, including Foreign Military Sales in these regions.

1. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the ASD(ISA) under current regulations and practices?

The responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, ASD (ISA), are outlined by DoD Directive 5111.07. My role, if confirmed, would be to serve as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy with respect to defense policy and strategy for the Middle East, Europe, Russia, and Africa. ASD (ISA) is responsible for coordinating policies with the Joint Staff, representing the Department in interagency deliberations, helping manage the Department's defense relationships with foreign partners from the above regions, and overseeing various security cooperation and assistance programs, among other responsibilities.

2. If confirmed, what additional duties and functions would you expect the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to prescribe for you?

If confirmed, I would focus on the actions and relationships under the purview of ASD (ISA). I am unaware of any specific additional guidance the Secretary of Defense or Under Secretary of Defense for Policy would prescribe for the ASD (ISA) position.

3. What background and experience do you possess that qualify you for this position?

I previously served at the Pentagon as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia from 2009 to 2012, and later as the Senior Director for Russia and Central Asia at the National Security Council staff from 2013 to 2017. While these roles focused heavily on Russia and European security – which are a crucial component of the ASD (ISA) portfolio – they equipped me more broadly with the skills to manage critical defense relationships, navigate the interagency policy formation process, and develop national security policy in response to complex geopolitical contexts. I have dedicated my career to studying and implementing policy related to European and Eurasian security, specifically Russian foreign policy and defense strategy. My career in and out of government

in foreign and security policy has also provided substantial exposure to an extensive range of global security issues.

Major Challenges and Priorities

4. If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish?

If confirmed, the specific priorities I would establish will depend in large measure on the priorities of the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)). These priorities, among others, will in all likelihood include bolstering our critical alliances while ensuring our allies contribute meaningfully to our shared security objectives, strengthening U.S. credibility and influence in key regions, confronting Russian and Iranian coercion or aggression, defeating ISIS and other terrorist groups, and ensuring that the Office of the USD(P) plays a meaningful and constructive role within the Department's contributions to our national security.

5. In your view, what are the major challenges, if any, you would confront if confirmed as ASD(ISA)?

From a general policy perspective, I believe the major challenges include some of the issue areas above. It is often a challenge amidst the daily demands and urgent crises to ensure we are not only meeting immediate demands but also making progress on long-term strategic objectives. Another challenge will be to support the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, the Secretary of Defense and the U.S. Government in resolving these and other issues – and pursuing opportunities – amidst a range of resource constraints and reconciling global priorities, trade-offs, and risks.

6. If confirmed, what management actions and timelines would you establish to address each of these challenges?

If confirmed, I would want to first examine the existing management structure of the organization, as well as the assumptions and timelines associated with meeting these challenges, before providing an answer. Ultimately, prioritization and timelines of confronting these challenges will depend on guidance from the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, as well as interagency consultations or Presidential determinations. Recognizing that some of these challenges fall outside of the portfolio of the ASD (ISA), if confirmed I would work with my colleagues across the government to address these discrete threats with specific strategies, consistent with a comprehensive global defense strategy and our national interests.

Detainee Treatment and Guantanamo Bay

7. 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 (DOD) Detainee Program, dated August

19, 2014, and required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?

Yes, I support the standards for the treatment of detainees in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3; in DoD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program; and as required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92). The U.S. Government may not subject any individuals in our custody to any treatment or interrogation technique or approach that is not listed or authorized by the Army Field Manual or any other DoD or Army directive, manual, instruction, or other form of policy or guidance.

8. What role would you expect to play, if confirmed, in the detainee transfer process at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba?

As I understand the role, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs will play a coordinating role with other elements of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the detainee transfer process for detainees held at the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

National Defense Strategy and Interim National Security Strategic Guidance

The 2018 NDS outlines the threats confronting the United States: a rising China, an aggressive Russia, and the continued threat from rogue regimes and global terrorism. In March 2021, the Biden Administration issued its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, which sets out the national security priorities for the Administration. Among these priorities is the requirement to “promote a favorable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions”. The Administration has initiated the process of preparing a new National Defense Strategy, planned for issuance in 2022.

9. Do you believe that the 2018 NDS and the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance accurately assess the current strategic environment, including the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies?

Based on the security environment at the time, I believe the 2018 NDS correctly identified strategic competitions with China and with Russia as the primary challenges animating the global security environment.

I believe the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance accurately articulates the breadth and scale of the challenges we face and sets forth priorities to advance our vital national interests. The threats are increasingly global in nature; the distribution of power across the world is changing, creating new threats and opportunities; the international order the United States helped establish is being tested; and the ongoing revolution in technology underpins many of these shifts.

10. Do you support the national security priorities set out in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, including for regions within the ASD(ISA)'s purview?

Yes, I support these priorities. If confirmed, I would expect to focus on the defense elements of implementation consistent with Administration guidance.

11. In your view, what global security developments since 2018 should be addressed as part of the new NDS?

I recognize the NDS process is nearing completion. The 2018 National Defense Strategy highlighted a number of regions and challenges that either fall under ASD/ISA's portfolio, or closely impact it, and continue to be relevant to the national security landscape today. These include Russian and Iranian coercion or aggression; China's efforts to improve its placement, access, and leverage in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East; violent extremist organizations and terrorism; and, overarching challenges to the international order that the United States must work closely with its allies and partners to address (e.g., effects of a changing climate and the COVID pandemic).

12. If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you recommend for the Department's implementation of the 2018 NDS with regard to the issues and regions in the ASD(ISA)'s purview, such as the continuing threat of Russian aggression against Ukraine?

If confirmed, I would recommend identifying how DoD efforts can be better integrated with those of other elements of national power and alongside our allies and partners, in light of the guidance within the President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. I appreciate the vast number of bilateral defense relationships and multilateral institutions ASD/ISA plays a direct role in and would work within the Department to leverage them in NDS implementation.

13. In your view, what are the key elements of strategic deterrence in the 21st century?

As directed by Secretary Austin, the Department is working to develop the concept of integrated deterrence. This involves bringing all of our tools of national power to strengthen deterrence, including leveraging our alliances and partnerships, taking a whole-of-government approach, considering deterrence across the spectrum of conflict, and considering all of our capabilities across domains and theaters.

14. What is your assessment of the security cooperation relationship between China and Russia, and what do you perceive to be the potential for their joint military cooperation against the United States in the context of both day-to-day strategic competition and in conflict? Please explain your answer.

Russia and China collaborate in the economic, diplomatic, and military/security arenas. While the two nations do not agree in many ways, they both align when it suits them. Each poses different challenges to the United States and has different motivations for its actions.

Both Russia and China seek to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model, gaining leverage over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions. Both nations undermine global security and the rules-based order by undercutting such basic values as liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. What they both share is a preference for a world in which the United States and its allies and partners are weaker, less unified, and less influential. Together with allies and partners, the United States must be vigilant and united in opposing their malign action and influence.

Approaches to Strategic Competition

The NDS references “expanding the competitive space.” The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance calls for strengthening U.S. “enduring advantages” to prevail in strategic competition with near-peer rivals. Although their approaches differ, both China and Russia have been successful in competing with the United States below the threshold of armed conflict.

15. In your view, what are the distinctions between the military capabilities and capacities the United States needs to prevail in day-to-day strategic competition with Russia and the capabilities and capacities it needs to deter Russia’s use of military force to achieve political objectives and, if necessary, prevail in a military conflict with the Russia?

The Department’s review of its National Defense Strategy (NDS) will appropriately examine the U.S. military’s approach, roles, and capabilities as they relate to day-to-day strategic competition, including with Russia. Warfighting credibility is critical to underwriting deterrence and diplomacy. Many of the capabilities and capacities needed for laying this foundation of warfighting deterrence would also be applicable for day-to-day strategic competition. I believe the Department must also develop new concepts and pursue greater integration with allies and partners to advance U.S. vital national interests.

16. In your view, what enduring advantages vested in the United States will enable it to prevail in the strategic competition with Russia and with China?

I believe the United States benefits from a range of enduring advantages, to include the strength of our democracy at home, the American people, our robust economy, and the strong network of alliances and partnerships that we have helped build and strengthen over the course of decades. These strengths will help enable the United States to protect and advance vital national interest in the strategic competition with Russia and China.

17. If confirmed, what policies and approaches would you implement to sustain and strengthen those advantages?

If confirmed, I would seek to work with others in DoD, and in concert with allies and partners, to creatively apply these strengths to advance the Department priorities. For example, the Department should consider ways to better collaborate with the private sector, state, and local authorities to improve resilience in key areas. The Department might also consider enhancing ally and partner capabilities, improving interoperability, and

collaborating to improve their resilience strengthen their ability to help deter aggression and resist coercion. Also, further prioritization of key challenges and opportunities, increased clarity and shared understanding of responsibilities and authorities across the U.S. Government departments and agencies, and better integration of efforts can help to further strengthen our collective ability to advance key national objectives.

18. In your assessment, what new capabilities are needed for the Joint Force to compete below the threshold of armed conflict?

I understand that the NDS Review is examining this issue in detail. If confirmed, I will work within the Department to ensure the Joint Force continues to develop key capabilities for this challenge.

19. If confirmed, what policies would you propose to counter China’s efforts to compete strategically below the threshold of armed conflict in regions within the ASD(ISA)’s responsibility?

I understand that the NDS Review is closely examining this issue. I believe that the Department should continue to frame military efforts to compete strategically below the threshold of armed conflict as one of many elements of competition undertaken as part of a whole-of-government approach. The military should seek to integrate with other instruments of national power, including diplomatic, economic, and intelligence activities.

20. Secretary Austin and other Biden Administration officials have characterized China as America’s national security “pacing threat.” Given that reality, what tradeoffs do you foresee as necessary to address threats other than those posed by China, most notably threats from Russia?

I understand that this is a key question under examination as part of the NDS Review. My view is that we need to make strategy-driven choices across the near-, mid-, and long-term timeframes, as well as across capability, capacity, and readiness.

The 2018 NDS also provides that “effectively expanding the competitive space requires combined actions with the U.S. interagency to employ all dimensions of national power. We will assist the efforts of the Departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Energy, Homeland Security, Commerce, USAID, as well as the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, and others to identify and build partnerships to address areas of economic, technological, and informational vulnerabilities.

21. In your view, has the interagency been effective in a whole of government effort to expand the competitive space? Please explain your answer.

I believe that U.S. departments and agencies have made notable progress in advancing national objectives by pitting U.S. strengths against competitor weaknesses throughout the competitive space. For example, diplomatic initiatives such as work in the Quad format (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States) provide a strong example of how multilateral

cooperation can be used to address common security challenges. Another example is the Russian Influence Group, co-chaired by U.S. European Command and the Department of State, which identifies whole-of-government solutions to counter Russian threat networks.

22. If confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you have to better employ all dimensions of national power to expand the competitive space?

I believe further prioritization of key challenges and opportunities, increased clarity and shared understanding of responsibilities and authorities across the U.S. Government departments and agencies, and better information sharing and integration of efforts can help to further strengthen our collective ability to advance key national objectives.

Africa

23. In your view, what are the greatest threats to U.S. national security interests in Africa, and what policy objectives should the United States pursue to protect them?

The proliferation of violent extremist organizations followed by China's increasing influence are the greatest threats to U.S. national security interests in Africa. While we have confronted violent extremist organizations, and continue to do so through a whole of government approach, we need to do the same with China with respect to U.S. national security interests in Africa.

24. In your view, what are the strategic objectives of China and Russia in Africa?

Both China and Russia are seeking to increase their access and influence on the continent. China is doing it primarily through economic means and Russia through security. The People's Republic of China's efforts in Africa include a range of diplomatic, economic, and military engagements designed to cement influence and access. China maintains its only permanent overseas military base in Djibouti, and has expressed interest in building additional military installations elsewhere on the continent. Economically, China pursues agreements with African countries to expand its political influence and obtain access to African markets and natural resources. China leverages its economic influence across the continent to gain diplomatic support within the United Nations and to dampen criticism over its own domestic policies.

Russia continues to leverage security assistance, defense materiel sales, and the provision of Russian proxy actors (such as Russian private military companies) as a means to increase leverage and influence in Africa. These activities provide Russia with opportunities to project power and influence into African states.

25. In what ways, if any, do those strategic objectives challenge or otherwise conflict with the strategic objectives of the United States broadly, and DOD specifically?

In addition to undermining regional stability and security, China and Russia seek to increase access and influence at the expense of the United States. China and Russia seek to gain influence across the continent by lowering the bar for human rights and good governance.

26. What is your assessment of the U.S. strategy with regard to strategic competition with China and Russia in Africa to date?

The U.S. strategy must be a whole of government approach that demonstrates an enduring commitment to the region's economic and security development. We must take a more strategic approach to identifying Chinese and Russia activities we find most threatening to U.S. interests and prioritize countering those.

China prioritization of economic means necessitates the U.S. Government to encourage or promote transparent business practices amongst African nations. The U.S. strategy should prioritize Chinese investments that pose a threat to U.S. national security objectives and interests. If confirmed, I will look to reinvigorate DoD's role in a whole-of-government approach to strategic competition.

Russia requires a similar, holistic and integrated approach, however the threat posed by Russian activity in Africa is substantially different than in the Chinese context. Russia tends to lead in Africa with offers of security contracts, which then give way to defense materiel relationships, leading to a slow pivot by African militaries from Western governments and Western military training and assistance towards Russian capabilities. This risks boxing out the United States and our Allies and partners. In some cases, Russia is also quite adept at creating opportunity from tragedy, and exploiting countries in a period of instability. DoD needs to be able to provide security assistance in a timely fashion and remain the partner of choice for African military security needs as a means to remain fully involved in the continent.

27. What do you believe to be the DOD role in achieving the primary objectives of that strategy?

DoD's role in achieving the primary objectives of that strategy are to build partner capacity, address threats with allies and partners, and develop African nations to be exporters of security. The presence of U.S. military personnel and assets demonstrates our commitment to our allies and partners in the region and instills confidence as they work to confront strategic competition on their own terms.

28. How would you assess the effectiveness of such efforts to date?

While whole of government efforts to date have shown promise, there remains much work to be done. With the support of Congress, we will be better positioned to address strategic competition. DoD's efforts are most successful when integrated into a whole of government

approach and, if confirmed, I will work with the other departments and agencies to ensure unity of effort.

29. What is your assessment of the threat posed to the United States and our allies and partners, by ISIS, al-Qaeda, and associated violent extremist groups in Africa?

ISIS, al-Qaeda, and associated violent extremist groups in Africa remain a prominent threat to U.S. interests as well as to our allies and partners in Africa. Maintaining pressure on these violent extremist groups in Africa remains a key component of mitigating this threat. If confirmed, I will align my office's effort with that of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity conflict to prioritize threats posed by these groups.

30. Which groups do you assess to pose the greatest threat, and why?

The ability of ISIS- and al-Qaeda-aligned groups to utilize familiar terrain and derive resources from the local populace increases their ability to threaten U.S. interests. Ongoing instability in the Sahel and Somalia are particularly worrisome and the two dominant groups there, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin and al-Shabaab, pose threats to U.S. interests. Both of these groups are associates or branches of al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab has previously stated its intent to target the U.S. homeland.

31. What is your view on the decision to remove the majority of U.S. military forces out of Somalia to an "over-the-horizon" posture?

I understand that the previous administration made the decision to remove the majority of U.S. military forces out of Somalia. It is my assessment that any decision on force posture should be grounded in a firm understanding of U.S. policy objectives and a reflection on the appropriate authorities and U.S. government tools to meet them. If confirmed, I look forward to participating in a review of our approach to degrading violent extremist organizations that threaten U.S. interests and regional stability.

32. In your view, is an "over-the-horizon" approach to counterterrorism able to effectively meet U.S. national security interests in the region?

An "over-the-horizon" capability can be effective but it is one aspect of a whole of government approach to counterterrorism, and it should be continuously assessed to ensure the posture approach is appropriate to meet U.S. policy objectives. If confirmed, I would support DoD continuing to work by, with, and through partners and allies to bolster the effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts.

33. In your assessment, what are the political and security implications of the involvement of Russian contract security forces, such as the Wagner group, in volatile and brittle security situations such as Mali and Libya?

Russian contract security forces provide some African nations with a relatively low cost security alternative to address their security needs. However, they come with a number of

negative consequences. Contracting for security leaves the security forces in these countries underfunded and ill equipped to handle their nation's longer-term security priorities. They also fuel instability by adding proxy fighters and arms to already unstable situations. In Libya, for example, contract personnel fought at the behest of one party in the political divide, which served to prolong the conflict. Russian proxy forces have also conducted human rights violations in Africa, according to a UN report detailing abuses against civilians in the CAR. From a U.S. national interest perspective these proxy forces also increase Russian influence in the region, including in the information and media space, often at the cost to U.S. or European influence.

Middle East

34. In your view, what are the greatest threats to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East and what policy objectives should we pursue to protect them?

In my view, the greatest threats to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East are from Iran and its proxies and violent extremist organizations, including al-Qa'ida and ISIS. The United States should address Iranian and Iranian-backed threats by pursuing diplomacy to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, working with regional partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities, and responding to attacks from Iranian proxies on U.S. forces. The United States should continue to work with our allies and local vetted partner forces, including the Iraqi Security Forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces, to prevent an ISIS resurgence.

35. To what extent does achieving U.S. national security interests in the Middle East require a continuous U.S. military presence there, in your view?

U.S. national security interests require a continuous military presence in the Middle East in order to defend the homeland from attacks by violent extremist organizations and rapidly respond to contingencies. Our presence in the Middle East also allows us to build the capacity of regional countries to take on a larger role in maintaining regional stability over the long term. As Secretary Austin said at the Manama Dialogue several weeks ago, no one should doubt our resolve or our capabilities to defend ourselves, and all those who work alongside us to keep the region secure.

36. Are there any countries in which you would recommend reducing U.S. troop presence? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the analysis generated through DoD's Global Posture Review and consulting with the Joint Staff to understand opportunities for more dynamic, agile, and tailored deployments in the region, in coordination with allies and partners.

37. To what extent is the Middle East relevant to great power competition?

The Middle East is an important theater for strategic competition. The Middle East sits along key waterways for the movement of global commerce, energy supplies, and military assets. China and Russia are increasingly engaged in undermining the U.S. position in the Middle East through weapon sales and infrastructure projects, and have ambitions to establish military installations that could undermine U.S. force protection and the security of U.S. technology.

38. What, in your opinion, should be DOD's role in efforts to compete with Russia and China in the Middle East?

In my opinion, DoD's role in strategic competition in the Middle East should be focused on supporting our partners in pursuing shared security interests and in developing their own capabilities. Doing so effectively will ensure that the United States remains the security partner of choice in the region.

Iraq and Syria

39. From a DOD standpoint, what must be done to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS?

To ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS, I believe DoD should, as part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, focus on supporting vetted local partner forces, including the Iraqi Security Forces and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), through training, advice, and assistance with the objective of improving their ability to independently manage the ISIS threat.

40. What non-military efforts are necessary to sustain the enduring defeat of ISIS?

The enduring defeat of ISIS cannot be achieved through military means alone. As long as the underlying grievances that facilitated ISIS's rapid expansion remain unaddressed, ISIS's ability to reconstitute remains a threat. If confirmed, I would support a broad U.S. whole-of-government approach in Iraq and Syria, including civilian-led humanitarian and stabilization efforts to address these underlying grievances, including local security, economic, and service provision efforts.

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

I believe the United States should remain focused on practical and achievable goals in Syria, such as maintaining U.S. military presence to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS and working with the international community to promote and expand the provision of life-saving humanitarian assistance and access. The United States should also sustain existing ceasefires and support international norms for human rights and accountability. These steps are essential to establishing a foundation for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict under auspices of the United Nations that represents the will of the Syrian people.

42. At this point in time, do you believe that a limited U.S. military footprint in Syria and Iraq is important to U.S. national security interests in Syria, Iraq and the broader region? Please explain your answer.

I believe that a U.S. military footprint in Iraq and Syria is important to securing U.S. national security interests in Iraq, Syria, and the broader region. The U.S. military presence enables it to work with the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and local vetted partner forces to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS. The U.S. military presence and support also enables civilian-led humanitarian and stabilization efforts.

43. What are the Russian Government's key strategic interests and objectives in Syria and how successful have they been at accomplishing them?

Russia has made clear that it intends to ensure a continued a Russia-friendly regime in Syria by supporting Bashar al-Assad. This support has enabled the Assad regime to continue its campaign of violence against the Syrian people, including conducting human rights abuses. Russia has not dedicated the resources that would demonstrate a concerted effort to prevent an ISIS resurgence in Syria.

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

The key U.S. national security interests in Iraq are ensuring the enduring defeat of ISIS and supporting a sovereign and stable Iraq. It is my understating that the United States works to secure these interests by advising, assisting, and enabling Iraqi Security Forces as they lead in the fight against ISIS, advancing the U.S.-Iraq strategic partnership, and supporting Iraq's improved relations with regional states as a counterweight to Iran.

45. Do you support the Administration's decision to transition U.S. combat forces from Iraq by the end of 2021?

I support the Administration's decision, made in consultation with the Government of Iraq, to transition from a combat role to an advise, assist, and enabling role. It is my understanding that the decision was made due to the increasing capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces in the fight against ISIS.

46. How do you envision the missions and size of the U.S. military presence there going forward?

U.S. forces are in Iraq at the invitation of the Iraqi government; the future of the U.S. military presence in Iraq will be dependent on the evolving needs of the Iraqi security forces. If confirmed, I will work across the U.S. government and with our Iraqi and Coalition partners on the continued evolution of our mission.

47. How would you characterize Iran's influence in Iraq?

It is my understanding that Iran tries to increase its political and military influence in Iraq by providing financial, advisory, and other support to Iraqi Shia militia groups and their associated political factions. Through this support, Iran uses Iraq as a platform to undermine regional stability. Iran's support to these militia groups threaten Iraqi sovereignty, stability, and the prosperity of the Iraqi people.

48. If confirmed, what strategy would you recommended to limit Iranian malign influence?

If confirmed, I look forward to working across the Department of the Defense and with other departments and agencies on implementing a whole-of-government approach to limiting Iranian malign influence. There are no simple or single solutions to the challenge posed by Iran-backed militias to Iraq's own sovereignty and security, or the security of our forces. This whole-of-government strategy should focus on bolstering Iraq's democratic institutions, increasing Iraq's engagement with its Arab neighbors, and countering threats to U.S. personnel.

49. How would you characterize China's influence in Iraq?

Like in the rest of the Middle East, the People's Republic of China continues to expand its interests and activities in Iraq, especially economically through One Belt, One Road and other initiatives but also militarily. Through these initiatives, Beijing seeks to displace the United States as the premier partner in the region. For example, the PRC is the largest market for Iraqi oil export and Beijing has sold strike-capable unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to Iraq.

50. If confirmed, what strategy would you recommend to limit Beijing's malign influence?

To counter China's malign activities, we must continue to reinforce our long-standing partnerships in the region, including the U.S.-Iraq relationship. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the Department and across the U.S. government to continue strengthening our partnership, and support the development of a secure, stable, and independent Iraq.

51. In your opinion, what is the appropriate role of NATO in Iraq and in what ways, if any, would you recommend altering the current NATO Mission Iraq?

It is my understanding that the NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) is a non-combat mission, focused on ministerial-level institutional development and professional military education instructor training and that NMI and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) are distinct, but complementary, missions. NMI's institutional development activities help the Iraqi Security Institutions and Iraqi Security Forces strengthen their capacity to defend Iraq's sovereignty, contributing to Iraq's long-term security, stability, and prosperity. I support NMI's efforts to improve Iraqi security institutions as these efforts enable Iraq to secure its territory more effectively from threats such as ISIS.

52. Do you believe that Iranian and American interests in Iraq converge to any extent? Please explain.

Iran and the United States have divergent interests in Iraq. Iran, through its support for militia groups and other policies, seeks to foment instability in Iraq, to make Iraq dependent on Iran, and to use Iraq as a platform to threaten regional stability. In contrast, the United States seeks to bolster the stability and independence of the Iraqi government so that it can maintain good relations with its neighbors and advance the concerns of the Iraqi people.

Iran

53. What is your assessment of the current military threat posed by Iran?

The Iranian threat spans its military's conventional capabilities, to include the region's largest ballistic missile force and a naval force capable of threatening freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, as well as unconventional capabilities including armed unmanned aerial systems used for direct attacks. Iran also proliferates advanced conventional weapons to militias across the region that threaten U.S. forces and our regional partners. Iran has also taken provocative steps to advance its nuclear program.

54. If the United States were to return to compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), what concerns, if any, would you have for regional security? Please explain your answer.

Iran and its proxies have worked to undermine regional security before, during, and after both the JCPOA and the Maximum Pressure campaign. I understand that the Administration's goal is to negotiate a mutual return to the JCPOA in order to put Iran's nuclear program back in a box, and then use that agreement as a basis for negotiating a longer, stronger deal that addresses Iran's other destabilizing activities. If a mutual return to the JCPOA is achieved, the United States will need to continue working with our allies and partners to address Iran's destabilizing activities until a further agreement can be reached.

55. Do you assess that Iran desires to achieve a nuclear weapons capability? Please explain your answer.

I agree with the U.S. Intelligence Community's published assessment that Iran is not currently undertaking key nuclear weapons development activities necessary to provide a nuclear device. However, I remain concerned that Iran's leaders seek to retain the option to pursue a nuclear weapons capability in the future.

56. What is your understanding of the objectives of the U.S. security strategy with respect to Iran?

I understand that on the Iranian nuclear program the Administration is pursuing a diplomacy first strategy in which the State Department is working with U.S. Allies to put the Iranian nuclear program back in a box. At the same time, the United States is strengthening the

capacity of our regional partners to address Iran's destabilizing activities, deterring attacks by Iran and its proxies on U.S. personnel, and if necessary, responding to attacks by Iran or its proxies.

57. What is the role of the U.S. military in this strategy?

The Department of Defense through its calibrated regional force presence builds the capacity of our regional partners to address Iran's destabilizing activities, deters Iranian aggression, and, if necessary, defends against and respond to Iranian or Iranian-backed attacks.

58. Are U.S. military forces and capabilities currently deployed to the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Areas of Responsibility (AOR) adequate to deter and, if necessary, respond to threats posed by Iran?

The Department of Defense currently has a significant force presence in the USCENTCOM AOR, and it is important to underline that the theater is set not only with what the U.S. has pre-positioned, but also what our allies and partners contribute and what we can rapidly flow in. If confirmed, I will work with counterparts in the Joint Staff to shape the evolution of the DoD mission as the Department continuously evaluates the appropriate mix of forces to maintain deterrence against Iran and demonstrate the capability to deploy at the time and place of its choosing in response to real-time events.

59. What is your assessment of U.S. national security interests placed at risk by the growth of Iranian influence in the Middle East?

Iran is a destabilizing actor who arms and supports proxies that attack U.S. partners and interest in the region, including transportation and energy infrastructure, as well as U.S. interests. These activities threaten the lives of American civilians, military and diplomatic personnel, the stability of global energy markets, and the stability of partner governments. On top of that, Iran's nuclear program also has profound implications for U.S. objectives with regards to nuclear non-proliferation, both in the Middle East and around the globe.

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

The U.S. strategy to counter Iranian malign influence focuses on strengthening the capabilities of our regional partners to defend themselves and their sovereignty. The United States also mobilizes the broader international community to expose and respond to Iran's destabilizing activities, while the U.S. military deters, and if necessary, prepares to respond to attacks by Iran and its proxies.

61. Which office holder in Iran is more powerful, in your view: the leader of the IRGC, or the Iranian president? Why?

The Iranian political system has multiple centers of power to include the President and the leader of the IRGC. In the current environment, the new Iranian President retains significant influence and is close with the Supreme Leader, who is Iran's ultimate decision maker.

Yemen

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

The primary national security interest in Yemen remains ensuring that groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS-Yemen cannot maintain a safe haven from which to conduct attacks against the U.S. homeland. Additionally, the aggressive actions taken by the Houthis – with support from Iran – against U.S. partners contribute to instability in the Middle East and threaten the territorial defense of our Gulf partners, including Saudi Arabia. I believe it is in the national security interest of the United States to secure a cessation of hostilities and ultimately a political solution to end the conflict, which is the only long-term solution to this crisis.

63. What do you assess to be the strategic goals of Ansar Allah?

The actions of Ansar Allah – also known as the Houthi movement – are prohibiting efforts toward peace in Yemen, exacerbating the dire humanitarian plight of the Yemeni people, and destabilizing the region. The movement has opted to use tools of violence, repression, and military force to impose its will and achieve its goal of restoring the former Zaydi Shiite Islamic Imamate in Southwest Arabia. Leaders in the movement have also expressed their intention to control the two Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia, signaling ambitions beyond Yemen's borders. I support the renewed emphasis that the Biden Administration has placed on a two-track approach in Yemen: diplomacy to end the war through a political solution, and enhanced relief efforts to address the worsening humanitarian situation.

64. What do you assess to be Saudi Arabia's primary strategic goals in Yemen?

Saudi Arabia's primary strategic goals in Yemen are to reinstate the internationally recognized Republic of Yemen Government (RoYG) in Sanaa, curtail Iran's malign influence in the country, and deter the Iranian-backed Houthi attacks against Saudi Arabia.

65. In your view, has Saudi Arabia responded appropriately and proportionately to the threat it faces from the Houthis including rocket and drone attacks on Saudi Arabian territory?

Houthi rebel cross-border attacks against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are persistent and deadly. Saudi Arabia maintains its right to defend itself and protect its citizens and the innocent civilians residing in the Kingdom, including the tens of thousands of U.S. citizens, from the genuine security threats emanating from Yemen and elsewhere in the region.

Historically, Saudi Arabia's conduct of its military campaign in Yemen raised serious concerns about civilian casualties. If confirmed, I will work with interagency partners to synchronize our actions and capabilities with those of our regional partners towards an integrated deterrence approach that helps to end the war in Yemen and mitigate harm to civilians. I will emphasize adherence to the laws of armed conflict.

66. In your view, what are the implications of the Biden Administration's decision to cease offensive support operations to the Saudi-led coalition and how do you define "offensive support operations"?

Ending the war in Yemen is in the national security interest of the United States. A political resolution is the only long-term means of bringing the war in Yemen to an end. President Biden stated on February 4 at the State Department that all American support for offensive operations in the war in Yemen, including relevant arms sales, would end while underscoring U.S. commitment to push for a diplomatic resolution to the Yemen war. In the June 2021, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, President Biden stated that "United States Armed Forces, in a non-combat role, continue to provide military advice and limited information to regional forces for defensive and training purposes only as they related to the Saudi-led Coalition's campaign against the Houthis in Yemen."

67. To what extent do you believe Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners have made progress in avoiding civilian casualties and ensuring appropriate accountability when allegations of civilian casualties arise?

Civilian casualties at any level are a serious concern. To address this concern the Administration suspended two specific munitions sales to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that are associated with unacceptably high rates of civilian casualties in Yemen, and continues to emphasize best practices for mitigating the risk of civilian harm in its defense and military engagements with Saudi counterparts. The Administration consults with many international and non-government monitoring bodies to assess reports of civilian casualties in Yemen. For example, the United Nations Civilian Impact Monitoring Project released its 2021 third quarter update in November and recorded the second lowest quarterly number of civilian casualties resulting from Coalition airstrikes since CIMP began reporting in 2018.

68. To what extent are the Houthis, supported by Iran, a threat to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea?

The Houthis represent a threat to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea due to their offensive actions in the maritime domain. As the State Department said, these actions interfere with freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and threaten international trade and regional security. The materiel and technical support the Houthis receive from Iran, including armed unmanned surface vehicles (USV), unmanned aerial systems (UAS), and missiles, have enhanced the Houthis' lethal capabilities over time.

69. If confirmed, what U.S. policies and actions would you recommend to address this threat?

If confirmed, I will advocate for and support the efforts of Department of Defense and interagency colleagues to address threats to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea through maritime interdictions of illicit weapons transfers where possible and through enhancing the capabilities of regional U.S. partners to address those threats themselves such as through improved counter-unmanned surface vehicles, counter-unmanned aerial systems, and other maritime and air defense capabilities. Economic sanctions and designations targeting those individuals and businesses seeking to procure weapons from Iran and oversee attacks threatening civilians and maritime infrastructure are another important tool to address this threat.

70. In your assessment, if U.S. support to Saudi Arabia were reduced and arms sales limited, would Saudi Arabia seek support from China and/or Russia? Please explain your answer.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an important U.S. security partner for cooperation in promoting regional stability, security, and countering Iranian influence. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is under threat from Iran-backed militant groups and relies on U.S. support to address those threats, including the provision of maintenance, training, and early warning information sharing. Competitors, like China and Russia, seek to exploit tensions between the United States and its security partners. Saudi Arabia already buys arms and weapons from China and Russia, signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement with Russia last summer, and would likely turn further to U.S. strategic competitors for additional support in the event U.S. assistance were reduced. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the United States remains the security partner of choice with the Kingdom while keeping U.S. values, including human rights, at the forefront of cooperation.

Egypt

71. What is your assessment of the security situation in Egypt and the U.S.-Egypt security relationship?

Egypt faces a number of security challenges, including ISIS-Sinai Province (ISIS-SP), ongoing instability in Libya, regional tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), and border security threats. The strategic defense relationship between the United States and Egypt, which has underpinned the broader bilateral partnership for decades, helps Egypt meet these security challenges. U.S.-provided security assistance to and security cooperation with Egypt, focused on counterterrorism and border security, also increases interoperability between our forces and helps to secure regional stability in Africa and the Middle East.

72. What role do the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) play in the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty?

The MFO has provided reassurance to both Israel and Egypt for 40 years by ensuring both parties adhere to the security provisions of the 1979 Egypt-Israel Treaty of Peace.

The MFO presence and organization provide Egypt and Israel a trusted mechanism to resolve disputes, avoid conflict, and foster dialogue on shared security concerns in the Sinai Peninsula.

73. Should the U.S. maintain its military deployment to the MFO?

U.S. contributions to the MFO anchor other countries' contributions and bolster U.S. credibility as a leader in diplomatic and security initiatives globally. If confirmed, I would maintain DoD's commitment to the MFO and to supporting its mission.

74. What would be the risks of reducing this commitment, in your view?

Reductions in the number of U.S. authorized personnel at the MFO could impact the MFO mission, the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, and regional stability. If confirmed, I would ensure that any possible changes to the level of U.S. support to the MFO would take into consideration the above-mentioned potential impacts and would include extensive consultation with others.

75. In your view, should we continue to provide defense articles and services purchased by the Egyptian military using U.S. Foreign Military Financing funds?

U.S. Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is a central element of the bilateral relationship, supports Egypt's legitimate defense needs, and supports U.S. industry in helping to modernize Egypt's military. U.S. FMF also supports efforts to ensure Egypt is using our equipment in a manner that is consistent with U.S. interests and values. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that U.S. FMF funds for Egypt continue to serve U.S. national security interests and Egyptian defense needs.

76. What is your assessment of Egypt's deepening ties with Russia?

Egypt is diversifying its military cooperation with other foreign partners, including Russia. These deepening ties have been demonstrated in recent years through key leader engagements, military drills, joint infrastructure projects, and Egypt's pursuit of Russian military equipment, such as Su-35 fighter aircraft. Egypt's increasing ties with Russia could hamper bilateral U.S.-Egyptian cooperation and could trigger the Counter America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). If confirmed, I would communicate these concerns to Egyptian counterparts, as well as the risk that deepening ties with Russia could pose to Egypt's national interests.

77. Where do U.S. and Russian interests converge in Egypt?

I understand that the Department of Defense is concerned by deepening Egypt-Russia ties, in part because Russian goals and activities are not consistent with U.S. interests in Egypt and in the region. That being said, the United States and Russia do share a common counter-

terrorism interest in the Sinai, though we choose to pursue this objective in very different ways.

78. Where do they diverge?

The United States has an interest in a politically inclusive, economically vibrant, and secure Egypt with a professional military force that can protect its land and maritime borders and counterterrorism in the Sinai, and that respects civilian control of the military and human rights. Russia does not share those goals. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the United States remains Egypt's partner of choice, as U.S. training, equipment, and other materiel is better able to meet Egypt's security needs, mitigate the risk of civilian harm, and ensure broader regional stability.

79. What is your assessment of ISIS and al-Qaeda affiliates' relative strength in Sinai?

I assess that the Egyptian government has made significant progress in its counterterrorism fight in the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt still faces terrorist threats, however, and it is in the U.S. interest to help Egypt confront terrorist threats in a manner that reduces civilian harm and respects human rights.

80. What type of support to Egypt do you assess to be beneficial in countering these groups?

Egypt's counterterrorism operations have benefited from U.S.-provided equipment and training. I expect that continued support of this kind would benefit Egypt's counterterrorism fight. If confirmed, I would work within DoD, with other departments and agencies, and with Congress to ensure that U.S. support advances shared counterterrorism objectives and is consistent with U.S. values.

81. Do you have concerns about the implications of Egypt's engagements with the Assad regime? Please explain.

I am concerned about any efforts to normalize relations with the Assad regime, whether those efforts are undertaken in Cairo or elsewhere. If confirmed, I would urge states in the region to consider the atrocities that the Assad regime has and continues to inflict on the Syrian people before they engage with the regime.

Russia

82. What challenges does Russia pose to U.S. national security interests and what are the key principles and policies that you believe must underpin a successful strategy to protect U.S. interests?

Russia remains determined to enhance its global influence and play a disruptive role on the world stage. It has invested heavily in efforts meant to check our strengths and to prevent us from defending our interests and allies around the world. Russia has also consistently undermined international norms by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbors, which additionally threatens the regional stability of our Allies and partners. The Russian government's malign actions are underwritten by a capable military that continues to pose a near-peer strategic challenge to the United States.

Any successful strategy to counter Russia starts with reconfirming our commitments to the international rules-based order and the rights of all nations to determine their futures. In this endeavor we must also ensure that our European Allies in particular are standing with us shoulder to shoulder.

83. In your opinion, what are the most effective ways to deter Russia or Russian backed separatists from further aggression against Ukraine?

Deterring Russia from further aggression against Ukraine must be a whole-of-government effort combined with our Allies and partners, similar to what Secretary Austin has termed integrated deterrence. The Department of Defense has an important role to play in bolstering Ukraine and deterring Russia militarily, but DoD's efforts should buttress our national diplomacy and leverage one of our nation's strongest advantages, our network of Allies and partners.

84. In your view, what are the key elements of a strategy to counter Russian hybrid tactics?

The key elements of a strategy to counter Russian hybrid tactics undoubtedly involves a whole of government effort to defend against, challenge, and deter these threats. In April 2021, the Administration sanctioned Russia, conducted diplomatic expulsions and introduced new visa restrictions and export controls for Russian interference in the 2020 elections, the SolarWinds cyberattack, and Russia's poisoning of Alexei Navalnyy. This effort required departments and agencies involved in law enforcement, intelligence, diplomacy, and financial issues to coordinate and synchronize response actions to target Russian misbehavior and hold Moscow to account.

85. What is your assessment of U.S. efforts to counter such tactics to date?

Russia relies upon hybrid tactics because they believe they can apply force asymmetrically, and that the United States will respond, but not in a way that will fundamentally hold Russian interests at risk. To the extent that the United States, working with Allies and partners, can make U.S. responses to Russian hybrid/malign tactics more impactful and costly as a means to deter this type of behavior, we should continue to explore these mechanisms.

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

Putin has presided over considerable growth of capabilities in the cyber domain, in information operations and non-attributable military capabilities in the form of Russian Private Military Companies like Wagner. In using these capabilities, Putin is betting that the United States will weather the blows and either not respond or respond in a manner that does not inflict significant cost on Russia. Our approach should seek to make clear that these tools are not viable for any nation-state to use, and we should continue to hold him accountable -- in lock-step with our partners and allies. The Department of Defense maintains significant capabilities in the information space, considerable cyber capabilities, and other options to counter these threats. If confirmed, I expect that DoD will continue to support U.S. Government responses to Russian malign activities alongside other law enforcement, intelligence, diplomatic, and financial Departments and Agencies.

87. What do you view as the benefits and drawbacks of the statutory limitations on military cooperation between the United States and the Russia Federation?

Military cooperation should remain limited given Russia's ongoing military aggression against Ukraine. Bilateral military deconfliction with Russia, which plays an important role in reducing tensions and the risk of miscalculation, should continue as a means to prevent miscalculation and risk reduction, and must be carefully distinguished from military cooperation.

88. In your opinion, what advantages did Russia gain when it violated and eventually abrogated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty?

Russia violated the Treaty because it sought to gain military advantage against the U.S. and NATO while also seeking to project a positive image in Europe as a constructive treaty-compliant country. As a result, Russia has gained the ability to produce and field more affordable and flexible intermediate range ground-based systems integrated onto an already existing launcher family (the Iskander system).

What does the United States need to do to mitigate any advantages Russia derived from this action?

My understanding is that the United States works through the Strategic Stability Dialogue and the NATO-Russia Council to raise its concerns about Russia's growing capabilities, and to explore ways to improve European security. I will add that Russia's mendacity on our attempts to address Russia's violation of the INF treaty over 6 years leads us to be skeptical of the sincerity of Russia's approach to these issues.

89. In your view, are the integrated air and missile defense capabilities of the United States in Europe adequate to address the ballistic missile and advanced cruise missile threats from Russia, and more specifically, do U.S. capabilities provide adequate air base air defense?

Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) plays an important role in deterring and mitigating adversary anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. Russia is investing in an

A2/AD strategy to impede our freedom of movement in Europe. If confirmed, I will work with Department and other stakeholders and our NATO Allies to ensure we have the right capabilities to address Russia's capabilities and ensure our freedom of movement.

90. From your perspective, what are the most effective ways of deterring Russian aggression against its neighbors?

I will preface this by saying that our total commitment to NATO and Article 5 mutual defense guarantee is vitally important. I think we need to deal with Russia with a blend of Alliance unity, the threat of economic action, credible military deterrence, and dialogue with Russia's leaders when it is in our mutual interests. Not allowing Russian rhetoric or diplomatic initiatives to cause rifts in the Alliance is vital, and the Alliance should speak with one voice.

Europe

91. In your view, are current U.S. force posture, investments, and engagements with partners and allies in Europe adequate to meet U.S. objectives in the AOR?

The recently-published Global Posture Review (GPR) assessed DoD's forces, footprint, and agreements in Europe and determined that, with the adjustments announced and implemented over the past year, current DoD posture and supported activities are sufficient to accomplish regional objectives. In Europe, the GPR strengthens the U.S. combat-credible deterrent against Russian aggression and enables NATO forces to operate more effectively.

92. What changes, if any, would you recommend?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with stakeholders across DoD, the U.S. Government, Allies, and partners to continue identifying additional ways to enhance U.S. deterrence posture in Europe, using the GPR as a framework for future posture decisions.

93. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the investments and activities carried out as part of the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI)?

Through such investments as pre-positioned equipment, exercises to enhance interoperability with our Allies, and adjustments to our force presence in Europe, EDI is achieving its goals of enhancing the U.S. deterrence posture, increasing the readiness and responsiveness of U.S. forces in Europe, and supporting the collective defense and security of NATO Allies. It has been a critical impetus in bolstering investment in security capability and capacity of U.S. Allies and partners in the region.

94. What changes, if any, would you recommend to EDI objectives or supporting investments, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will work (with stakeholders across the Department, U.S. Government, and Allies and partners) to determine what adjustments should be considered in order to further

improve critical capabilities and U.S. and Allied readiness to ensure EDI investments remain responsive and relevant to the current security environment.

95. What is your view of Russia’s military buildup in and around Ukraine earlier this year?

Russia’s aggressive military build-up in and near Ukraine is a top concern for the United States and our NATO Allies and partners. If Russia further invades Ukraine, the United States and our Allies and partners should impose severe economic measures, increase defense assistance to Ukraine, and work with NATO Allies to assess the adequacy of the Alliance’s military posture and capabilities in light of Russian aggression in Europe.

96. Is there more DOD should be doing to to bolster our collective security, defend U.S. presence, deter Russia, and reassure our European Allies and partners in the region?

The recommendations implemented from the recent Global Posture Review strengthen the combat-credible deterrent against Russian aggression and enable NATO forces to operate more effectively. Through a combination of rotational and permanently-stationed forces, U.S. capabilities in Europe – both conventional and nuclear – are a tangible signal of the U.S. commitment to the collective defense and security of the NATO Alliance.

In addition to the investments and pre-positioned equipment and infrastructure enabled by EDI, our support and integration with NATO activities, exercises, and security cooperation programs provide the greatest deterrent to Russian adventurism and aggression. If confirmed, I look forward to working with stakeholders across DoD, the U.S. Government, Allies, and partners to continue identifying ways to enhance U.S. deterrence posture in Europe, using the GPR as a framework for future posture decisions. We are united with our NATO Allies in making clear that any further aggression against Ukraine would carry a very high price. If Russia decides to invade Ukraine further, I am confident that the United States and NATO are well positioned to take all necessary measures to ensure defense and security of Allies.

97. What is your view on the provision of assistance to Ukraine, including lethal assistance?

I strongly support the provision of defensive lethal assistance to ensure Ukraine has the equipment it needs to defend itself. Ukraine also has critical non-lethal requirements, such as secure communications equipment, as well as training and advisory needs. These efforts all remain critical to help Ukraine’s forces preserve the country’s territorial integrity and progress toward NATO interoperability in the face of continued Russian aggression.

98. If confirmed, will you continue and accelerate DoD’s work to help Ukraine develop critical deterrent capabilities?

Yes. I remain concerned about reports that Russia remains postured for a further invasion into Ukraine, and U.S. security assistance efforts should remain a top priority.

99. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure that assistance is delivered to Ukraine in an efficient manner?

If confirmed, I will actively assess if there is anything more the Department can do to accelerate our assistance to Ukraine and make adjustments as necessary.

Defender Europe 2021 and other exercises the United States conducts with European Allies and partners illustrate our collective ability to mobilize large forces rapidly to respond to a crisis.

100. Do you support DOD maintaining the high level of intensive and frequent exercises it has conducted in Europe in recent years?

Given the rapid pace of emerging technologies and threats across multiple domains, it is imperative that the United States and Allied militaries work closely and frequently together to ensure the highest level of readiness. Conducting intensive and frequent exercises is key to demonstrating that the U.S. military and its Allies are capable of rapidly deploying combat-credible forces in Europe to deter Russian aggression and respond to emerging crises across all domains.

101. What is your opinion regarding the potential sale of new F-16s to Turkey by the United States, would such a sale be a net positive or negative for U.S. security interests and why, or why not?

I'm not aware of the specifics of any potential sales, but I support Turkey, as a member of NATO, continuing its modernization efforts for its F-16 fleet. I also see Turkey's interest in purchasing U.S. equipment as a positive sign. I understand that Turkey is a key contributor of F-16 capability to the Alliance, which is a net positive for U.S. security interests, and I believe we would want to enable them to continue making those contributions.

Russian and U.S. Strategic Systems with respect to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

102. What is your assessment of the effects of Russian nuclear modernization activities—particularly short range and intermediate range nuclear systems—on the NATO alliance?

I am concerned by Russia's development and fielding of systems that are not accountable under – and thus not constrained by – the NEW START Treaty. These systems are designed to offset NATO and U.S. conventional military advantages. Ultimately, they undermine regional stability and threaten the security of our NATO Allies.

103. Do you support the integration of nuclear dual-capability on the F-35A aircraft?

Yes, I support a dual-capable F-35 as a critical part of U.S. extended deterrence

commitments and NATO nuclear sharing arrangements. This capability contributes to the credibility of NATO's nuclear forces, which is central to maintain deterrence.

Russia has worked to develop a wide range of novel nuclear capabilities, some of which analysts characterize as potential, "first-strike weapons," such as the SARMAT heavy intercontinental ballistic missile, the POSEIDON nuclear unmanned underwater vehicle, and the so-called SKYFALL nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile.

104. To what extent do you believe Russia's pursuit of such capabilities undermines the security of NATO allies?

These systems, some of which are unconstrained by treaty, undermine strategic stability and increase the likelihood of nuclear use due to miscalculation.

105. If confirmed, what steps would you recommend the United States and NATO take to address this growing threat?

The United States should be willing to negotiate arms control agreements to reduce or eliminate these capabilities, and should review our defense and strategic capabilities to manage the threat in the event that negotiations do not succeed.

Over the past several years, the Intelligence Community and a number of DOD officials have highlighted the substantial and increasing disparity in the number of Russian tactical nuclear weapons as compared to those possessed by the United States.

106. What are your views on Russian tactical nuclear forces not covered by the New START Treaty and whether existing arms control measures adequately address these capabilities?

I believe that future arms control agreements with Russia should include Russian non-strategic nuclear forces.

107. What is your assessment of effects of the AEGIS Ashore missile defense system on NATO allies and Russian perceptions?

Although Moscow regularly complains about the presence of Aegis Ashore platforms in Romania and Poland, my understanding is that these systems are not designed to defend against Russia's sophisticated offensive missile capabilities. Rather, these two platforms are designed to confront potential missile threats emanating from outside Europe, such as Iran. NATO allies regularly cite the presence of Aegis Ashore as among the most important aspects of the NATO Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system.

NATO

The 2018 NDS provides that “[m]utually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match.”

108. In your view, to what extent does adherence to the Wales summit commitments on defense spending the Allies made in 2014 bolster the effectiveness and credibility of NATO?

The Wales Defense Investment Pledge, including its 2% of GDP benchmark, is critical to the effectiveness and credibility of NATO. To address the range of threats and emerging challenges facing Allies, the Alliance must adapt and invest in new capabilities. Without the investment in defense today, we will not have the necessary capabilities and contributions tomorrow.

109. In your opinion, are there other metrics that may provide better insights into the health of the Alliance than the percentage of Gross Domestic Product spent on defense?

NATO is a political and military alliance with the ultimate purpose of guaranteeing the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. The health of the Alliance should be based on meeting this objective. That includes continued defense spending and investment to meet important markers of sharing responsibility for our common defense. Secretary General Stoltenberg often highlights cash, capabilities and contributions. The Alliance should also continue to promote democratic values that enable productive consultations and cooperation on defense and security-related issues.

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

Yes. President Biden has made clear the transatlantic alliance is the strong foundation on which our collective security and our shared prosperity are built. U.S. commitment to NATO Allies under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is crucial to U.S. strategic interests. This shared commitment and the values enshrined in the Washington Treaty ensure NATO will remain the most successful Alliance in history. NATO will remain critical to vital U.S. interests, including deterring Russian aggression, competing with China, and reducing the ability of violent extremist organizations to threaten the U.S. homeland and our Allies.

111. What should be the major strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years?

The Alliance’s major strategic objective remains guaranteeing the safety and security of its members. This includes deterring nuclear and non-nuclear aggression, defending Allied populations and territory if deterrence fails, and projecting stability beyond NATO’s borders.

112. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges for NATO in the coming five years?

The Alliance faces a range of challenges including confronting an aggressive Russia and competing with an emboldened People's Republic of China. The Alliance also must confront the ongoing threat of terrorism and emerging challenges like cyber security and climate change.

113. What do you perceive to be the most important improvements in capability that the Alliance must make to deal with the current and future threats it faces?

The Alliance particularly strives to improve readiness, a critical component of presenting a strong defense and deterrence. Readiness requires Allies to invest in defense to procure, prepare, and provide interoperable and ready forces and capabilities. NATO is also increasing focus on Emerging Technologies. All this is crucial for adapting to the changing security environment.

In alignment with DOD's Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) concept, in June 2021 at the Brussels Summit, NATO Allies pledged to enhance multi-domain operations.

114. If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure NATO Allies continue to progress in enhancing these capabilities—all with a view to ensuring the Alliance can respond collectively to crisis in the Euro-Atlantic area at the speed of relevance?

I understand Allies work together in numerous NATO channels as well as nation-to-nation, to advance capabilities for joint operations across domains, for example in areas of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Command, Control, and Communications (C3). If confirmed, I would engage with U.S. colleagues and Alliance counterparts to continue and enhance the U.S. leadership role in these areas.

115. In your view, how can DOD best maintain the capabilities, capacity, and readiness required to respond to crisis in Europe while also engaging in credible day-to-day deterrence vis-à-vis our great power competitors?

Capabilities for response to European crisis are actually a key part of our day-to-day deterrence of great power competitors, particularly Russia. The U.S. strives to maintain an array of capabilities fitting for various theaters worldwide -- including through the recent Global Posture Review, which strengthened our force posture in Europe. If confirmed, I would engage in DoD's continual review and adjustment of our posture, as the evolving security environment requires.

116. How do you envision the update to NATO's strategic concept will affect Alliance priorities?

The Strategic Concept sets the Alliance's strategy. It outlines NATO's enduring purpose and specifies the elements of the Alliance's approach to security. I would expect that the new Concept will provide guidelines for NATO's political and military adaptation to ensure the Alliance continues to be prepared to execute its core tasks of Collective Defense, Crisis Management, and Cooperative Security. I would also expect it will put heightened focus on deterrence and defense, and on addressing threats from Russia and challenges from the People's Republic of China.

117. If confirmed, how would you drive that discussion to ensure alignment with DOD priorities?

If confirmed, I would work with U.S. interagency colleagues, both civilian and military, to help shape a U.S. approach to NATO's strategic concept discussions that advances those U.S./DoD priorities. This would include consulting with Allies on, and sharing U.S. conclusions from, the various recent U.S. strategic reviews.

In December 2020, NATO reaffirmed the Allies' longstanding position that, "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance," and that, "the strategic nuclear forces of the United States are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance." Additionally, in remarks late last year, NATO's current Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, echoed this point, stating, "A world where Russia, China, North Korea and others have nuclear weapons, but NATO does not, is not a safer world."

118. Do you agree that U.S. nuclear forces continue to serve as the "supreme guarantee of the security" of NATO?

Yes. For over 60 years, the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in NATO countries has successfully deterred aggression against the Alliance. NATO's nuclear capabilities preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. They also provide an essential political and military link between Europe and North America.

119. Do you believe this principle requires the United States to continue to deploy nuclear weapons in NATO countries?

Yes. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance, and as long as nuclear weapons remain a threat, I believe U.S. nuclear weapons should remain in NATO countries.

Balkans

120. What are the U.S. national security interests in the Balkans?

The Balkans are a critical region for European security. Our greatest national interest in the Western Balkans is to help maintain peace in a region still haunted by wars fought less than three decades ago. It is also in the United States' national security interest to promote regional stability, encourage further Euro-Atlantic integration, and facilitate stronger

partnerships between regional actors. The Balkan Peninsula is home to eight NATO Allies, including the Alliance's four newest members – Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. Continuing our important work with these Allies to modernize their armed forces and build interoperability with NATO will facilitate greater burden sharing and pay dividends. The Balkan Peninsula is also a focal point of our strategic competition with Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC), so it is important that we remain engaged there.

121. How would you describe the current threats to security and stability in the Balkans?

Our Allies and partners on the Balkan peninsula must contend with various threats to regional security and stability. These range from conventional threats, such as Russian force build-up in the Black Sea, to hybrid threats, such as disinformation, cyberattacks, and Russia's use of energy as a tool of political manipulation. In the Western Balkans, unconsolidated democratic institutions present a risk, particularly in light of unresolved grievances along ethnic lines. For instance, ethnic separatism and challenges to the institutions established by the Dayton Peace Accords threaten the functionality and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the slow pace of negotiations in the EU-led Brussels Dialogue is preventing Serbia and Kosovo from normalizing relations or cooperating on key issues like electricity distribution and regional commerce. The PRC seeks corrupt and coercive economic and security inroads, particularly through its One Belt One Road and other PRC-backed projects that may increase Balkan countries' exposure to coercion and affect the security of critical infrastructure.

122. What do you see as the role of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) and what conditions should be met before that presence can be reduced or eliminated, in your view?

KFOR remains an important facilitator of a safe and secure environment for all citizens in Kosovo, which has been its critical role nearly 23 years. KFOR's troop footprint has steadily decreased over the past two decades based on NATO's assessment of the personnel KFOR needs to maintain a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic, and peaceful Kosovo. Normalization between Serbia and Kosovo is an important and necessary next step in achieving these aims.

Russia and China continue to invest in infrastructure and serve as moneylender to nations across Europe—particularly in southeastern Europe. Such investments may provide mechanisms for coercive power and influence in European affairs.

123. If confirmed, what specific steps would you recommend the United States take to encourage our Balkan allies and partners to resist such influence campaigns by Russia and China?

The United States continues to demonstrate to our Balkans Allies and partners that the Euro-Atlantic path is the best route to stability, security, and prosperity. We must continue diplomatic engagement with Allies and partners on the long-term negative impacts of

disinformation and predatory investments from Russia and China and the need to protect critical infrastructure. We would also continue our assistance efforts to enhance resilience to malign influence through continued development of countries' cyber defense capabilities, particularly the most vulnerable. Russia and China are not interested in European unity or NATO interoperability, and know their strategic investments can drive wedges between European partners.

Defense Security Cooperation

124. In your view, what are the necessary and appropriate strategic objectives that should underpin the Defense Department's approach to building the capabilities of a partner nation's security forces?

Security cooperation investments should be targeted to advance broader goals to address shared current and future threats. DoD building partner capacity efforts should focus on enhancing ally and partner capabilities to effectively operate alongside and in lieu of U.S. forces to address shared national security challenges. The forthcoming National Defense Strategy will further shape the strategic objectives and integrated approach of DoD security cooperation.

125. In the competition with near-peer rivals, what steps would you recommend, if confirmed, to ensure that the United States is taking a strategic approach to its security cooperation with allies and partners?

Aligned with whole-of-government security sector assistance efforts, Department of Defense security cooperation tools should bolster ally and partner capabilities for defense and advance shared national security interests through addressing regional security challenges. DoD security cooperation, developed and executed in coordination the State Department, serves to reinvigorate and modernize U.S. alliances and partnerships, reinforcing a critical American asymmetric advantage in competition with near-peer rivals.

Cyber

The 2018 DOD Cyber Strategy states that "the Department will work with U.S. allies and partners to strengthen cyber capacity, expand combined cyberspace operations, and increase bi-directional information sharing in order to advance our mutual interests."

126. What do you perceive to be the role of the ASD(ISA) in accomplishing these objectives?

If confirmed, I will support the implementation of the Secretary's vision of Integrated Deterrence, which, as I understand it, would incorporate cyber capabilities into all of our approaches, including those with partners and allies. I would work closely with my counterpart from ASD(Space), other OSD offices, the Services, the combatant commands, and other departments and agencies as appropriate to work with our partners and allies to strengthen their cybersecurity, thereby lifting the opportunities we have for cyberspace

operations and secure information sharing.

- 127. If confirmed, how would you plan to strengthen the role between your office and other DOD organizations that contribute to these objectives, such as United States Cyber Command, Cyber Policy, and the Principal Cyber Advisor?**

If confirmed, I would work closely with my counterpart from ASD(Space) as well as other DoD offices and organizations to coordinate our approaches to cyber security capacity building, planning, exercising, and operations with partners and allies.

- 128. If confirmed, how would you ensure that DOD perspectives on international cyber cooperation are coordinated within the interagency and that DOD perspectives are included in high level international engagements, such as in the June Biden-Putin summit?**

If confirmed, I commit to coordinating closely and regularly with my counterpart from ASD(Space) to provide unified DoD perspectives on international cyber cooperation in interagency meetings. I would look for opportunities to raise cyber-related issues when appropriate, and I will seek to contribute to a whole-of-government approach to cyber cooperation with our partners and allies.

Sexual Harassment

In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gender discrimination by “someone at work” in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

- 129. What is your assessment of the current climate regarding sexual harassment and gender discrimination in the Office of the ASD(ISA)?**

There is no place for sexual harassment, gender discrimination, or any other types of harassment within Policy. If confirmed, I will work in partnership with the Under Secretary in reviewing previous workforce surveys that would hopefully give me insight into the Policy’s culture to help understand its environment and what actions need to be taken, if any. I am aware of the GAO’s report recommending steps the Department take to address sexual harassment and assault among the civilian workforce. If confirmed, I will support the Department’s ongoing efforts to promote a culture of dignity and respect, including a commitment to tackling sexual harassment.

- 130. If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of the ASD(ISA)?**

If confirmed, I will take serious action immediately by initiating an inquiry to gather all facts, conduct necessary interviews, collect information, and address the complaint within the

specified guidelines of Federal statutes and Department of Defense regulations and policies. If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary to make clear to the ISA workforce that they deserve a respectful workplace, equality and diversity matters always, and I will work to support the Department's zero tolerance for harassment.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

131. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

132. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

133. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

134. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

135. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

136. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.

137. Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Yes.