

Advance Policy Questions for General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC
Nominee for Commandant of the Marine Corps

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and 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?

I don't see a need for modifications at this time.

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

N/A

Duties

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commandant of the Marine Corps?

Section 5043 in Title 10 of United States Code clearly prescribes the duties and functions of the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Commandant, subject to the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of the Navy, leads the recruiting, training, organizing, and equipping of the Marine Corps to support military operations by combatant commanders. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Commandant is responsible for advising the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

What background and experience, including joint duty assignments, do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?

I have served in a variety of key service and joint assignments within the Department of Defense that I believe qualify me to perform the duties of Commandant. I have commanded Marines from the platoon-level to the Marine Expeditionary Force and currently lead our Joint and Coalition partners as the Commander of both United States Forces and the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. In addition to these leadership assignments, I have served as the Vice Director of Operations for the Joint Staff, the Deputy Commandant for

Plans, Policies, and Operations, and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Commandant of the Marine Corps?

If confirmed, I will continue to study and seek to better understand the full range of issues affecting the Marine Corps and our broader National Security.

Major Challenges and Priorities

In your view, what are the major challenges that will confront the next Commandant of the Marine Corps?

The major challenges that will confront the next Commandant of the Marine Corps include supporting Marines at war in Afghanistan, ensuring the Marine Corps remains ready to immediately respond to any other crisis or contingency, all while balancing the need to modernize for tomorrow's crises and contingencies. It will be particularly important that the next Commandant ensure that the Marine Corps maintains and continues to develop the expeditionary and amphibious capabilities the Nation requires of its Corps of Marines. This will require making difficult decisions in a period of fiscal austerity.

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

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, and the Congress to ensure that the Marine Corps is properly resourced to meet both today's and tomorrow's challenges.

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

If confirmed, I will emphasize the need to maintain high quality, well trained Marines and a high state of readiness. The first priority will be to provide those Marines in harm's way with all that they need to fight and win. I will also continue to build on the superb foundation established by the current and former Commandants in professional military education, junior leader development, wounded warrior programs, and family readiness. I will also prioritize the development and fielding of capabilities that will ensure that the Marine Corps remains a relevant, naval, expeditionary force-in-readiness in the context of the 21st Century Strategic Landscape.

Role of the Marine Corps in Counterterrorism

What do you see as the Marine Corps' role in countering the threat of international terrorism?

The Marine Corps is the nation's crisis response force and stands ready to counter the full spectrum of threats to national security including international terrorism. Our perennially forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), as well as our newly-developed Marine Air/Ground Task Forces-Crisis Response (MAGTF CR), stand ready to counter terrorist threats and respond to instances of terrorist attack. In addition to these formations, the Marine Corps Security Force Regiment is a dedicated security and anti-terrorism unit that supports high-value naval units and facilities. It maintains specially trained Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Teams (FAST) in a high state of readiness to prevent or respond to terrorist threats worldwide.

The Marine Corps also provides the U.S. Special Operations Command with highly trained Critical Skills Operators from the Marine Corps Special Operations Command that are uniquely capable of supporting the fight against international terrorism.

What role do you envision for the Marine Corps in homeland security and homeland defense?

The defense of the homeland begins on far shores as part of a collaborative interagency defense-in-depth. The primary contribution of the Marine Corps is to protect the homeland by being forward deployed and forward engaged to shape the environment and respond to crises before the homeland is threatened.

When and if directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, the Marine Corps uses its active duty and reserve forces to rapidly respond to natural disasters or other threats against the homeland

If confirmed, do you plan any major changes to Marine Corps warfighting doctrine?

If confirmed, I do not plan any major changes to Marine Corps warfighting doctrine. I believe it is fundamentally sound. I do believe we can and should make evolutionary changes as we internalize the lessons learned from the last decade of crisis and contingency response and as changes occur in the strategic landscape.

U.S. Forces in Afghanistan

The U.S. has been negotiating a Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with Afghanistan which would provide the framework for some U.S. forces remaining in Afghanistan after the end of 2014. President Obama has announced that, assuming a BSA is signed, the United States is

prepared to retain 9,800 troops in Afghanistan after the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission ends in December of this year. The President also announced that by the end of 2015, that U.S. military presence would be reduced by roughly half, and by the end of 2016, the United States would draw down its military personnel in Afghanistan to a normalized Embassy presence with a security assistance office.

Do you support the President's decision on a continuing presence for U.S. forces in Afghanistan after 2014? **Yes.**

Do you support the pace of the drawdown of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan between December 2014 and the end of 2016, as announced by the President?

Yes, with an understanding that we should continue to validate the assumptions and assess the conditions on the ground as the drawdown takes place.

Should the Marine Corps be supporting such a sustained deployment of forces if we continue a presence in Afghanistan? **Yes.**

Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command (MARSOC), is a subordinate component command to the U. S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) established in 2005.

What is your assessment of the progress made in standing up and growing MARSOC, and what do you consider to be the principal issues that you would have to address to improve its operations?

I believe that MARSOC has become a highly effective and fully integrated part of the Special Operations Command. I have personally observed MARSOC's significant contribution to the campaign in Afghanistan. Also, the feedback I have received from leadership within the special operations community has been uniformly positive. Improving MARSOC will require continued emphasis on screening, training, personnel assignment policies, equipping, and the integration of MARSOC within the special operations community, with the MAGTF, and with other conventional forces.

The Marine Corps has a primary military occupational specialty for enlisted Marines trained as special operators allowing these personnel to remain in MARSOC for their professional careers.

Do you believe officers should have a similar opportunity as enlisted Marines to serve the duration of their military career in MARSOC rather than rotating through the command as they do currently?

I understand that the Commandant and Commander, SOCOM are in agreement that the current model of Marine officer assignment is not optimal. A joint Marine Corps-SOCOM assessment is in process to develop a more effective model. If confirmed, I will fully support that assessment and work with SOCOM to develop the most effective officer assignment policy.

Effects of Deployments on Readiness

What is your assessment of the current state of readiness of the Marine Corps?

I believe the Marine Corps has demonstrated its readiness over the past decade in responding to contingencies in Iraq and Afghanistan and to a wide range of crises across the world. That said, I know our home station readiness has been degraded as we have appropriately prioritized the readiness of those Marines who are forward deployed.

In your judgment, are combat operations in Afghanistan adversely affecting the readiness or retention of Marines on active duty and in the reserve component?

The Marine Corps has preserved readiness of deploying and next-to-deploying units. This includes units and Marines deploying to Afghanistan. I am not aware that combat operations in Afghanistan have adversely affected readiness or retention. Furthermore, Marine units assigned to Afghanistan have arrived prepared and ready for the mission.

If confirmed, what will be your priorities for maintaining readiness in the near term, while modernizing the Corps to ensure readiness in the out years?

If confirmed, I will prioritize resetting Marine Corps equipment from the wear and tear of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and restoring home station readiness. While near term readiness will remain the priority, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and the Congress to ensure that the Marine Corps is adequately resourced to deliver a ready Marine Corps tomorrow.

Recruiting and Retention

What do you consider to be the key to the Marine Corps' success in recruiting the highest caliber American youth for service and retaining the best personnel for leadership responsibilities?

The key to Marine Corps' recruiting success is the continued focus on finding highly qualified young men and women who are seeking the challenge of serving their nation. Continued access by recruiters to high schools and colleges not only assures the opportunity to engage a diverse and quality market, but also a market with the proven mental abilities to serve in technically challenging fields. Another key

component of our recruiting success is the Marine Corps' image of smart, tough, elite warriors. The time proven intangible benefits of service, pride of belonging, leadership, challenges and discipline are what we offer. Those attributes are what allows us to remain America's Force in Readiness.

What steps do you feel should be taken to ensure that current operational requirements and tempo do not adversely impact the overall readiness, recruiting and retention, and morale of the Marine Corps?

Effective recruiting will require that we continue to maintain a high quality and properly resourced recruiting force. I also believe sustaining an operational tempo of at least 1:2 will ensure that our readiness, retention, and morale remain high.

What is your assessment of current recruiting standards, particularly DOD-wide criteria for tier-one recruits, and their propensity to accurately predict minimal attrition and future success in military service?

Existing DoD standards enable the service to find young men and women who want to meet the challenge of becoming a United States Marine. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor our recruiting and retention efforts.

What impact, if any, do you believe the Department's proposals aimed at slowing the growth of personnel and health care costs will have on recruiting and retention in the Marine Corps?

If confirmed, I will carefully review the compensation reforms and the effects on recruiting and retention.

Do you believe that if Congress does not support these proposals, the resultant pressure on training and modernization resources could begin to harm retention?

I believe that compensation reforms must be informed by the fundamental requirement to maintain our crisis response and warfighting capabilities. If confirmed, I will carefully review the compensation reforms and the effects on training, modernization, and retention if Congress does not support the reforms.

Military Compensation

What is your assessment of the adequacy of military compensation?

The Marine Corps is meeting our recruiting and retention goals, and the current compensation package produces the force we need. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the adequacy of military compensation to ensure we recruit and retain the highest quality Marines.

What recommendations would you have for controlling the rising cost of personnel?

Given the fiscal constraints on the Department of Defense, I believe that the compensation proposals put forward by the President in the 2015 budget request are reasonable measures to slow the growth in military compensation in order to strike a balance between personnel costs, training and modernization that protects readiness.

Do you personally support the Administration's compensation and health care proposals?

Yes, I support these proposals. They slow the rate of compensation growth which is necessary for the Marine Corps to maintain readiness under current budget constraints. This budget achieves the necessary and appropriate balance in compensation, training, equipment and modernization. It sustains the recruitment and retention of high-quality personnel needed to defend our Nation, while still providing quality compensation and health care benefits to our service members. If confirmed, I will continually assess compensation and health care to ensure that we continue to maintain the balance between compensation, training, equipment, and modernization.

As the Marine Corps has the highest percentage of service members who leave after their first term, what is your assessment of the adequacy of compensation and benefits available for non-career service members?

By design, the Marine Corps is a young service and purposefully retains fewer service members at the first reenlistment decision point than the other services. Today, we are meeting all of our recruiting and retention goals and the quality of the force is extraordinary. Based on that fact, I believe compensation and benefits for non-career service members is adequate.

Education for Marines

An important feature of the Post-9/11 GI Bill is the ability of career-oriented servicemembers to transfer their earned benefits to spouses and dependents.

What is your assessment of the effect of the Post-9/11 GI Bill on recruiting and retention of Marines?

I believe that the Post-9/11 GI Bill positively contributes to recruiting and retaining high quality Marines

In your view, what has been the effect of the transferability option on retention and career satisfaction of Marines?

According to Marine Corps surveys, for all non-retirement eligible Marines who were required to make an FY15 reenlistment decision, 53% specifically indicated that the ability to transfer their benefits was an influence to stay in the Marine Corps.

How important do you believe tuition assistance benefits are to young Marines, and what trends do you see in the Marine Corps' ability to pay for such programs at current levels over the FYDP?

Post-secondary education is an important part of individual Marines improving their personal and professional development. Encouraging well-qualified Marines to utilize any and all resources to better themselves via education and training is part of the Marine Corps ethos. This leads to better Marines and in turn better citizens. I understand that the Marine Corps is adequately funded to provide tuition assistance benefits to well-qualified Marines.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to current eligibility criteria for tuition assistance?

I believe the Marine Corps is properly executing the tuition assistance program and I have no recommendations to change current eligibility criteria.

Assignment Policies for Women in the Military

The Department in January, 2013, rescinded the policy restricting the assignment of women to certain units which have the primary mission of engaging in direct ground combat operations, and gave 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 Marine Corps continues to develop gender-free physical and mental standards for all military occupations, presumably with the goal of allowing individuals, regardless of gender, to serve in those positions if they can meet those standards.

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

If confirmed, I will be decisively engaged in the development of gender-free standards for all military occupations to ensure that we continue to field the most capable Marine Corps possible.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the standards are realistic and preserve, or enhance, military readiness and mission capability? **Yes.**

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

Yes, and all of my recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Defense, and the Congress will be made in that context.

Relationship between Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Counsel for the Commandant, United States Marine Corps

How are the legal responsibilities of the Marine Corps allocated between the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant and the Counsel for the Commandant?

The Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (SJA to CMC) is the senior uniformed legal advisor to the Commandant and Headquarters, Marine Corps staff and agencies. In particular, the SJA to CMC supervises and manages the practice areas of military justice, operational law, civil and administrative law, legal assistance, and ethics.

As detailed in Department of the Navy policy (SECNAVINST 5430.7Q), the General Counsel of the Navy provides the Marine Corps with legal advice in the following areas: acquisition law, business and commercial law, real and personal property law, civilian personnel and labor law, fiscal law, environmental law, intellectual property law, ethics, and Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act law.

Who has responsibility for providing legal advice on military justice matters in the Marine Corps?

The SJA to CMC is responsible for delivering military justice advice to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and Headquarters Marine Corps. In all other commands throughout the Marine Corps, judge advocates, exercising the same independence required by the law, are the only individuals responsible for providing legal advice to commanders on military justice matters.

What is the role, if any, of the Counsel for the Commandant in the duty assignments of Marine Corps judge advocates?

The Counsel for the Commandant has no formal role in the duty assignments of judge advocates. The assignment of Marine Corps judge advocates remains with the Commandant.

What is your view of the need for the Staff Judge Advocate to the Commandant to provide independent legal advice to the Commandant of the Marine Corps?

It is essential that the SJA to CMC provide independent legal advice to the Commandant. The SJA to CMC's legal advice is independent because he is not subject to evaluation or supervision in the content of his advice from anyone other

than the Commandant. Fundamental to the duty to provide independent advice is the need for that advice to be provided without any form of interference by others.

What is your view of the responsibility of Marine Corps judge advocates to provide independent legal advice to Marine Corps commanders?

Like the SJA to CMC, Marine Corps judge advocates at all levels must be able to provide – and commanders must receive – independent advice on the exercise of convening authority. Part of what gives Marine Corps judge advocates the ability to provide timely and accurate independent advice is their service as unrestricted line officers. The common culture and philosophy, gained through shared professional background, experiences and hardships, builds trust, credibility, and context between commanders and their judge advocates, improving both the quality and independence of that advice.

General Officers

At the request of the Secretary of Defense, Congress included a provision in the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 that designated up to 324 general and flag officer positions as joint duty assignments that are excluded from the limitation on the number of general and flag officers in each service, and specified the minimum number of officers required to serve in these positions for each service.

What is your view of the merits of this provision and its impact on the Marine Corps?

This provision allows expanded assignment opportunities for Marine Corps' general officers and the exemptions provided under Section 526 provide increased flexibility for the Marine Corps and the Department to meet steady-state and emergent requirements. The "Joint Pool" enables us to satisfy the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 by improving unification, cooperation and coordination between the services and the combatant commanders in joint training and education and in the execution of military operations.

What impact has the implementation of this provision had on joint officer assignments of Marine Corps general officers?

While the number of assignment opportunities has not increased by an appreciable number, the strategic approach to Joint officer resource management has increased the variety of opportunities available. This has improved the quality of officers in the Joint community. This ensures the development of well-rounded, more effective senior officers, which benefits the Department of Defense and Marine Corps.

In your view, does the Marine Corps have statutory authority for a sufficient number of general officers to meet mission requirements of the Corps and joint requirements?

Yes, the numbers currently authorized are adequate for our current and future obligations and aligned with our future force structure plans.

The results of recent promotion selection boards for brigadier general have shown that a number of best qualified officers have not completed all requirements (i.e., joint professional military education, or joint tours of duty) before consideration by selection boards.

What factors do you consider most important in the difficulty experienced by field grade Marine Corps officers in satisfying joint requirements for promotion?

With the establishment a few years ago of the experience path to attain Joint Qualification, there is little difficulty for our best performing field grade officers to be fully qualified for consideration for selection to brigadier general.

Do you think that in today's operational environment that these requirements for promotion to O-7 should be modified? **No.**

What steps are being taken to ensure that officers who are competitive for promotion to general officer rank are able to fulfill all joint education and experience requirements?

Field grade officers are assigned to Joint Duty assignments and to JPME II producing schools (War Colleges) based on their performance. Our most competitive officers are provided those assignments.

Family Readiness and Support

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

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues in the Marine Corps, and, if confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced, especially in light of current fiscal constraints?

The most important issues are providing timely and accurate communication to our Marines and their families while properly resourcing the support functions on our bases and stations. If confirmed, I will ensure the Marine Corps remains committed to providing Marines and families with a comprehensive and effective community based support system.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs are critical to enhancement of military life for members and their families, especially in light of deployments. These programs must be relevant and attractive to all eligible users, including active duty and reserve personnel, retirees, and their eligible family members.

What challenges do you foresee in sustaining and enhancing Marine Corps MWR programs, particularly in view of the current fiscal environment and, if confirmed, are there any improvements you would seek to achieve?

Our greatest challenges are the fiscal realities of sequestration. If confirmed, I will ensure that we sustain priority programs that support the health, welfare, and morale of our Marines and families. I will also maintain a dialogue with our Marines and families to ensure that our MWR programs adapt to meet our highest priority needs.

Suicide Prevention

The numbers of suicides in each of the services continue to be of great concern to the Committee.

If confirmed, what role would you play in shaping suicide prevention programs and policies for the Marine Corps to prevent suicide and increase the resiliency of Marines and their families?

Suicide prevention is a leadership issue. If confirmed, I am committed to continue to set the climate to eradicate the stigma of getting help for this behavioral health issue. Our leaders must be engaged and knowledgeable of resources available to address this issue. We must also know our Marines and be alert to the signs that they need help. The resiliency of our Marines and their families will remain a priority.

Wounded Warrior Regiments

Service members who are wounded or injured in combat operations deserve the highest priority from their service and the Federal Government for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge. Despite the enactment of legislation and renewed emphasis over the past several years, many challenges remain.

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiments in facilitating the treatment and management of wounded, ill, and injured Marines?

I am extremely proud of the Marine Corps' focus on Wounded Warrior Care. As Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, I carefully tracked the progress of our Wounded Warrior Regiment, and if confirmed, will continue to expect the best care for our wounded, ill and injured Marines.

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

If confirmed, caring for our wounded, ill, and injured Marines and Sailors will remain one of my highest priorities. During my time as the Commanding General of I MEF and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, I worked with our Wounded Warrior Regiment leadership to ensure services were readily available to support our Marines.

If confirmed, I will seek counsel from the Medical Officer of the Marine Corps and other medical experts to ensure that we are proactively identifying symptoms, and addressing psychological health needs. I view this as a continuing commitment from the Marine Corps to its Marines.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

The Fiscal Year 2013 Department of Defense Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military reflects that reports of sexual assault in the Marine Corps increased by 86% from fiscal year 2012 to 808 reports of sexual assault in fiscal year 2013.

What is your assessment of this report?

The DoD Annual Reports on Sexual Assault provide us with comparative snapshots that allow us to measure progress across years. I will carefully assess the report and be prepared to provide further input to the committee.

What is your assessment of the problem of sexual assaults in the Marine Corps?

Sexual assault has no place in our Corps. Sexual assault not only has a long-lasting effect on the individual victim, but it also erodes unit readiness and command climate. The Commandant has placed particular emphasis on this issue and put measures in place to eliminate sexual assault. If confirmed, I will build on the current foundation.

What is your assessment of the Marine Corps sexual assault prevention and response program?

I see positive progress and indicators that the Marine Corps SAPR Program is

going in the right direction. However, I also believe that there is still much work to do. We must continue to increase reporting and decrease prevalence. We need to emphasize prevention to include focusing on potential offenders, implore all Marines to be active and responsible bystanders, and integrate the SAPR Program with other aspects of behavioral health. Marines must all work together to create an environment in which crimes of misconduct are not tolerated in any form.

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

Protecting the victim of sexual assault is imperative. Though unrestricted reporting provides a bridge to offender accountability, I respect that some victims do not want an investigation about these intensely personal details. Restricted reporting is a vital resource for these Marines, who may not otherwise come forward to access advocacy, medical, mental health, and legal services. I believe that giving victims access to the services they need is vital, regardless of how they report the crime.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in providing necessary support to victims of sexual assault?

I believe that the chain of command is invaluable to victims of sexual assault. Furthermore, commanding officers are responsible for setting positive command climates that not only help prevent the crime of sexual assault but that also provide a safe environment where victims feel confident coming forward to report. Without that initial trust and faith in their chain of command, victims may not report.

The chain of command is absolutely critical in creating a climate that is non-permissive to sexual assault. The chain of command also ensures that victims are in a safe and non-retaliatory environment and facilitates access to all supportive services.

What is your understanding of the adequacy of Navy and Marine Corps resources and programs to provide victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help they need?

I understand that the Marine Corps provides and continues to expand each of these services, which aims to encourage more victims to participate in the military justice process. However, I fully understand that the true measure of the effectiveness of these programs is how well they meet the needs of the victim.

What is your view of the steps the Marine Corps has taken to prevent additional sexual assaults both at home station and deployed locations?

I believe the Marine Corps has taken the right steps to combat sexual assaults within its ranks, however much work remains. I am committed to confronting this crime.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Navy and Marine Corps to investigate and prosecute allegations of sexual assault?

I am encouraged by the progress the Marine Corps has made in many areas of victim response, but the goal must be to further improve these services so that more victims stay engaged in the process and, as a result, offenders are held accountable.

What is your view about the role of the chain of command in changing the military culture in which these sexual assaults occur?

I believe the role of the commander is central to sexual assault prevention within the military. The commanding officer of every unit is the centerpiece of an effective and professional warfighting organization. They are charged with building and leading their team to withstand the rigors of combat by establishing the highest level of trust throughout their unit.

Commanding officers are responsible for setting and enforcing a command climate that is non-permissive to sexual assault, a climate in which the spirit and intent of the orders and regulations that govern the conduct of our duties will be upheld. There are a number of leadership styles, but the result of any of them must be a group of Marines and Sailors who have absolute trust in their leaders. Trust in the commander and fellow Marines is the essential element in everything we do. Developing this trust, dedication, and esprit de corps is the responsibility of the commanding officer. They do this by setting standards, training to standards, and enforcing standards.

In your view, what would be the impact of requiring a judge advocate outside the chain of command to determine whether allegations of sexual assault should be prosecuted?

Removal of Commanders' convening and disposition authority will adversely affect good order, discipline, and combat effectiveness. The Commander is responsible for everything the unit does and fails to do. This responsibility cannot be overstated. When a unit enters combat, success is directly dependent on the Commander's ability to enforce his or her orders and standards. The Commander's authority to refer charges to court-martial, especially for the most serious offenses such as sexual assault, is essential.

Judge advocates outside the chain of command do not share the Commander's responsibility for the unit, and have different priorities when determining what action to take in a particular case.

What additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to address the problem of sexual assaults in the Marine Corps?

I am encouraged by the progress the Marine Corps' has made, however there is much work to be done. If confirmed, I plan to sustain the momentum and progress of Marine Corps' SAPR efforts, and ensure that all Marines are committed to preventing this crime.

What is your assessment of the effect, if any, of recent legislation concerning sexual assault on the capability of Marine Corps commanders to prosecute sexual assault cases, including cases where prosecution is declined by civilian prosecutors?

I believe enhancing the Commanders' ability to prosecute sexual assaults is a step in the right direction. I am also encouraged by the provisions granting victims of sexual assault the right to participate more fully in judicial proceedings against their assailants. I expect that these new rights will make victims of sexual assault more willing to participate in sexual assault prosecutions. Greater participation by victims will likely enable Marine Corps' Commanders to refer more cases to court-martial because better evidence will support such referrals.

Recapitalization

The Marine Corps intends to concurrently recapitalize several of its front line systems. The MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and the Joint Strike Fighter are both scheduled to be in production at the same time.

Do you believe that these production plans are realistic in light of the demands on resources imposed by maintaining current readiness?

I understand the current production plans are realistic. I believe these platforms are vital to support Marines on the battlefield.

Do you believe that these modernization programs will survive unless Congress amends the Budget Control Act to eliminate or reduce the effects of sequestration for fiscal year 2016 and beyond?

I understand that sequestration will increase risk across all Marine Corps' modernization efforts.

Is it your understanding that MV-22 readiness rates in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in the U.S. have achieved desired levels?

In my current assignment I have been incredibly pleased with the performance of the MV-22. They have demonstrated readiness levels sufficient for combat missions

in Afghanistan. I understand that readiness rates in the U.S. are slightly lower, but sufficient to meet our requirements.

In your view, will the MV-22 be sustainable over time at an acceptable cost?

Yes. If confirmed, I will seek to continue the trend in reduced operating costs.

Army and Marine Corps Capabilities

What are your views regarding the joint development and acquisition of Army and Marine Corps equipment?

In my experience, the Marine Corps and the Army collaborate whenever our mission profiles converge. From a business perspective, collaboration leverages significant Army fiscal, manpower, and test resources in the refinement of operational capabilities requirements and the research, development, and acquisition of technical solutions to meet those requirements. Long term benefits include lower average unit costs for both services.

Do you believe the Joint Staff should have a role in synchronizing Army and Marine Corps requirements and service programs?

The Army and Marine Corps Board (AMCB) works at every level to make sure both services collaborate on best practices. I believe the AMCB provides sufficient oversight to synchronize requirements and programs.

What programs would you consider to be candidates for joint program development for the Army and Marine Corps?

I do not have any recommendations to provide at this time.

Modernization of Amphibious Capabilities

The Marine Corps' current concepts for modernization of its amphibious capabilities includes ships, ship to near-shore or shore connectors – such as the LCAC -- and armored amphibious combat vehicles. Modernization across these systems is complex, technically challenging, and potentially unaffordable given the budget environment today and for the foreseeable future.

What is your assessment of the current capability of amphibious maneuver and assault systems in the Navy and Marine Corps?

Marine Corps organic amphibious maneuver and assault capability and the preponderance of general support infantry mobility is provided by our Assault

Amphibian Battalions equipped with 40-year old AAV-7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicles. Without significant additional modifications and enhancements, these vehicles do not provide adequate force protection or lethality and will increasingly suffer declining readiness as subcomponents succumb to declining manufacturing sources and obsolescence.

If confirmed, how would you propose to prioritize development and acquisition among needed capabilities for sea basing, connectors, and armored amphibious assault and tactical mobility ashore to achieve your vision for a full spectrum force?

The development and acquisition of a full spectrum naval expeditionary force involves the planning and programming of naval expeditionary capabilities across both Navy and Marine Corps planning and programming accounts. If confirmed, I will continue to work with our Navy counterparts in defining the Marine Corps' seabasing requirements. I will personally review the complete portfolio of capability development to ensure we balance our investments to reflect the Marine Corps' role as a naval expeditionary force-in-readiness.

In your view, what is necessary to ensure that modernization of the amphibious force – ships, connectors, and vehicles—is achievable and affordable in the near and long term?

The key ingredient for achieving an effective and affordable amphibious force is the continued close collaboration between the Marine Corps and the Navy. I believe that we must continue development, planning, and programming of amphibious force required capabilities to meet assigned war plan tasks, as well as support the training and employment of forward deployed and rotational Amphibious Readiness Groups and Marine Expeditionary Units.

Specifically, to modernize our vehicle capabilities we must pay careful attention to capacity requirements and avoid over-investing, while paying particular attention to the intended performance and environmental requirements that will drive vehicle design.

In your view, will projected reduction in Marine Corps end strength, if implemented, reduce the Navy and Marine Corps' requirement for LPD-17 class ships? At what level of reduced Marine Corps end strength would the Marine Corps have insufficient forces to fill up a 12th LPD?

The amphibious warfare ship requirement is based on forward presence and rotational Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG)/Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU) as well as to deploy and employ the Assault Echelons (AEs) of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs). The 12th LPD is critical in meeting these requirements. I haven't seen any proposals that would relieve the Marine Corps of either requirement.

Amphibious Combat Vehicle

The Navy/Marine Corps amphibious assault capability today includes a large number of self-deploying amphibious assault vehicles (AAV-7) to carry infantry ashore, and a smaller number of small vessels called connectors that can ferry other vehicles, such as tanks and artillery, and supplies from ships to shore.

The Marine Corps has recently changed its plans for development of a next generation armored combat vehicle. Instead of investing in development of a new self-deploying amphibious assault tracked combat vehicle, the Marine Corps intends to reduce technical and fiscal risk by acquiring a wheeled combat vehicle that would have to rely on connectors to get from ship to shore or near shore. This would place additional demand on connectors that are expensive and consume a lot of space inside amphibious ships. Indeed, the Navy is today not procuring enough amphibious shipping to meet existing amphibious assault requirements, much less buying more ships to provide additional connector carrying capacity.

Unless there is a large increase in the number of connectors procured to carry wheeled infantry fighting vehicles ashore, and an increase in the number of ships to carry those additional connectors, it would appear that this plan will result in a diminished amphibious assault capacity.

Do you support the Marine Corps' decision to develop and field a wheeled armored vehicle to replace the AAV-7, the current amphibious assault vehicle?

I support the decision to develop and field a wheeled armored vehicle as an interim step in modernizing our tactical ship to shore mobility.

Will the Marine Corps decision to forego a self-deploying amphibious assault tractor lead to a diminution of amphibious assault capability? If not, why not?

If confirmed, I would not support forgoing an amphibious, self-deploying assault capability. I don't believe the current program reflects that.

In your view, where does armored amphibious assault fit in the set of capabilities required for to field a credible amphibious operations capability?

The likelihood of operations in the littorals requires a continued focus on the Marine Corps' responsibility to be organized, trained and equipped, for amphibious operations. I believe that armored amphibious assault capabilities are integral to our ability come from the sea.

Without self-deploying armored amphibious assault vehicles for Marine Corps infantry, what advantages would Marine Corps forces have over Army forces for conducting amphibious assaults in the future?

If confirmed, I will support the development of armored amphibious assault vehicles.

Amphibious Fleet Requirements

In the Spring of 2010, Secretary Gates made several public statements in which he appeared to question the need for and size of the Navy's amphibious fleet in future defense plans and budgets.

What is your view of the need for and size of the Navy's amphibious fleet?

The Navy and the Marine Corps have determined that 38 amphibious warships is required to support an assault echelon of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades.

What are the alternatives if the amphibious fleet is allowed to decline in size or capabilities?

I am not aware of any alternatives that have been developed to mitigate the requirement for an amphibious fleet.

F-35 Requirements

The Marine Corps has stated that its F-35 requirement is 420 aircraft. The total number of F-35s planned for the Department of the Navy is currently set at 680.

Do you believe that the current plan for 680 aircraft can fully accommodate the needs of both the Navy and the Marine Corps?

Yes. My understanding from a previous assignment as the Assistant Commandant is that 680 F-35s meet the Navy and Marine Corps requirement.

Naval Surface Fire Support

The DDG-1000 program was initiated to fill the capability gap for naval surface fire support. The original requirement for 24 to 32 DDG-1000 ships, each with two 155mm Advanced Gun Systems, was reduced to 12 ships, then to 10 ships, then to 7 ships, and finally to 3 ships.

In your view, does the total Navy program, with this significant reduction in the number of DDG-1000 destroyers, meet the Marine Corps' requirement for naval surface fire support?

With the truncation of the DDG-1000 program a maximum of six 155mm Advanced Gun Systems will be available for service in the fleet when all three ships are fully

operational at the end of the decade which will not support the doctrinal capacity requirements of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

What other capabilities would you rely upon to help meet naval surface fire support requirements?

In the absence of adequate naval surface fire support capability and capacity, the Marine Corps will likely rely on aviation delivered fires to mitigate the gap.

Joint Acquisition Programs

What are your views regarding joint acquisition programs, such as the Joint Tactical Radio System and the Joint Strike Fighter?

I support joint development where common capability gaps exist. Working with other Services is, and always has been, a major element of the Marine Corps overall Research and Development (R&D) and Procurement strategy. Our limited budgets demand that we adhere rigorously to the well-established Department of Defense (DoD) hierarchy of materiel alternatives. If we cannot find a solution to our materiel needs in the commercial marketplace, we always look next to take advantage of investments that other Services, DoD Components, or our foreign partners are making. This reduces our need to spend R&D dollars on unilateral efforts, and it gives all participants involved with joint programs the opportunity to reduce unit procurement costs, and ultimately, life-cycle operation and maintenance costs. The end result is realized in the form of commonality and affordability across the Services making it much easier to share sustainment resources such as training, maintenance equipment, and supplies.

Do you see utility in encouraging the services to conduct more joint development, especially in the area of helicopters and unmanned systems?

Yes. Encouraging joint development begins with collaboration of requirements during the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System process and the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC). This is a key element of fostering joint development among the Services.

If so, what enforcement mechanisms would you recommend implementing more joint program acquisition?

Within the Department of Defense, the enforcement mechanisms are already in place through the JROC which plays an important role in harmonizing the Services warfighting requirements and ensuring that joint program opportunities are fully examined.

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 Commandant of the Marine Corps? **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.**

~ END ~