

**Advance Questions for Lieutenant General Stanley A. McChrystal, USA
Nominee for Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, and
Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan**

Duties

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)?

Response: COMISAF is responsible for executing NATO's strategy in Afghanistan as delineated in OPLAN 10302. COMISAF's responsibility is to ensure that ISAF forces are utilized in the most effective manner possible in order to accomplish its objectives under UN mandate as well as meet the reporting requirements of SACEUR (as Commander of NATO Operations).

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A), and how do those duties and functions relate to those of the Commander, NATO ISAF?

Response: The Commander of the United States Central Command is my immediate commanding officer in the U.S. chain of command. Pursuant to Title 10 U.S. Code, section 164, he exercises Combatant Command authority which includes the command functions of giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training and logistics, over all U.S. forces in Afghanistan, less those under NATO Operational Control to ISAF. Commander, USCENTCOM provides the national level logistics and administrative support to USFOR-A to accomplish its mission as the National Support Element (NSE) for U.S. forces under NATO Operational Control to ISAF.

What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?

Response: My operational experience in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locations from 2002-2008 have provided me extensive experience in the region – and this conflict. While the operational focus of my most recent command (JSOC) focused primarily on counterterrorist operations, our integration with wider counterinsurgency efforts provided me almost continuous interaction with units and commands of every type and at every level.

At the strategic level, my assignments (2002-2003 and 2008-present) on the Joint Staff as the Vice Director, J-3 and then Director, Joint Staff have provided me insights into strategic issues and decisionmaking processes.

Finally, since 2001 I have had unique opportunities for extensive interaction with a wide range of USG InterAgency partners and had British Forces in my Joint Task Force in Iraq for almost 5 years.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Commander, ISAF, and/or Commander, USFOR-A?

Response: Yes, I need to better understand the NATO construct and the nuances of being a NATO commander. As for USFOR-A, I need to better understand the NSE and NCE responsibilities.

Relationships

Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, ISAF/Commander, USFOR-A, to the following:

NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Response: COMISAF is a subordinate commander, through Joint Forces Command Brunssum (JFCB), to NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR). SACEUR is one of NATO's two strategic commanders and is the head of Allied Command Operations (ACO). As such, he is responsible for the command and control of all NATO military operations, to include identifying forces required for the mission and requesting those forces from NATO countries, as authorized by the North Atlantic Council and as directed by NATO's Military Committee.

NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation

Response: As the other strategic commander within NATO, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SAC-T) and SACEUR work in tandem to promote the evolution of NATO's military capabilities and the requisite interoperability of those capabilities. COMISAF coordinates with SAC-T to leverage the expertise of ACT in order to maximize the effectiveness of pre-deployment training efforts and capture lessons learned of our NATO forces once in theater.

NATO Military Committee

Response: The Military Committee (MC) is charged with providing the North Atlantic Council (NAC) military advice on policy and strategy. As such, there is not a direct command relationship between COMISAF and the MC. However, it is critical that COMISAF provide honest and timely assessments of the situation so that the MC can make informed recommendations for the NAC.

Commander, U.S. Central Command

Response: The Commander of United States Central Command, as my immediate commanding officer in the U.S. chain of command, exercises Combatant Command authority over US Forces –Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and provides the national level logistics and administrative support for USFOR-A to accomplish its mission as the National Support Element (NSE) for forces under NATO Operational control to ISAF.

Commander, Combined Joint Task Force 82, Afghanistan

Response: Operational control of forces assigned to ISAF is exercised through Regional Commanders. The U.S. is the designated lead for Regional Command East, and as such, COMISAF exercises control over US forces assigned to RC East via Combined Joint Task Force-101. The 82nd Airborne Division is currently transitioning with the 101st Airborne Division and is expected to complete Transfer of Authority (TOA) by 1 June 2009. The COMUSFOR-A functions as the National Command and National Support element for all forces under the command of CJTF-82.

Commander, Combined Special Operations, Joint Task Force, Afghanistan

Response: COMISAF has no command relationship, other than a coordinating role through the DCOS Operations. However, as CDR of USFOR-A, the forces assigned to CJSOTF-fall under the command of Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A) which falls under the tactical control of USFOR-A. This allows COMUSFOR-A to integrate the Foreign Internal Defense (FID) tasks planned and executed by CFSOCC-A with the COIN plans and tasks executed by ISAF. Since Counter-Terrorism (CT), Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Counternarcotics (CN) must be integrated with COIN for operations in Afghanistan to be successful, having CFSOCC-A under the tactical control of USFOR-A helps him synchronize the COIN fight successfully.

Commander, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan

Response: CSTC-A is responsible for planning, programming, and implementing the generation and development of the ANSF. CSTC-A is operationally controlled by and receives tasks and orders from USFOR-A. CSTC-A also has coordinating authority with ISAF in order to synchronize ANSF development with the COIN mission.

United Nations Special Representative in Afghanistan

Response: COMISAF and the United Nations Special Representative (UNSRSG) work together in close coordination and partnership. The role of COMISAF is to create a security environment that enables government capacity building and development efforts by UNAMA and other international agencies that ultimately will benefit the Afghan government and its people.

U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Response: The U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan is the President's Senior Representative in the country. Commander, USFOR-A serves as the senior military advisor to the U.S. Ambassador. Commander, USFOR-A and the Ambassador work closely together to integrate civilian-military efforts across all lines of operation.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy and Major Challenges

What role, if any, did you play in the formulation of the Administration's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan announced in March?

Response: In my position as the Director of the Joint Staff, I supervised and provided guidance to Joint Staff directorates and offices to ensure the Joint Staff effectively coordinated with OSD, Services, Combatant Commands, and the interagency in the development of the new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. I also provided my inputs to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the formulation of the new strategy as he formulated his best military advice for the President.

Do you agree with the strategic goals set out in the new strategy?

Response: I agree with the strategic goal and associated strategic objectives outlined in the new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy.

They dovetail closely with the assessment that the Chairman provided to the President through the Secretary of Defense.

Increasing the strategic calculus to include Pakistan assesses the region as a whole in order to address common transnational challenges that face both Afghanistan and Pakistan, namely al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

The U.S. has a vital national interest in addressing the current and potential security threats posed by extremists in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The strategy identifies a realistic and achievable strategic goal and strategic objectives in the near to mid-term in order to reduce the threat.

The strategic goal to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan is essential to the long term security of the United States, our allies, and the region.

The strategy calls for the resources necessary for a fully-resourced counterinsurgency. It promotes a whole-of-government integrated counterinsurgency approach to address challenges in the region. As a result, significantly more resources will be devoted to the civilian efforts in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also calls for a regional approach requiring increased international engagement and participation as the international

community must work with Pakistan to help disrupt the threats to security along Pakistan's western border.

Has NATO adopted those goals?

Response: During the recent 60th Anniversary Summit in Strasbourg/Kehl, NATO Heads of State reiterated the four principles of NATO's strategic vision for Afghanistan: long-term commitment, Afghan leadership, a comprehensive approach and regional engagement. The US strategy includes these principles and in particular it calls for a "whole of government" methodology to achieve a comprehensive approach.

What are the major challenges and problems you foresee, if confirmed as the next Commander, ISAF/Commander, USFOR-A, in the implementation of that strategy?

Response: I believe we face three major challenges. The first of these is to secure the population and separate them from the insurgents. Only where we can prevent insurgents from controlling the population through intimidation and coercion can we provide an opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan, with our support, to establish full legitimate governance and stability

Second, we must work to improve governance at every level in order to facilitate development and other activities that will strengthen the legitimacy of, and popular support for, the Government – and reduce insurgent control or influence.

The third major challenge is to increase the capacity of Afghan National Security Forces (Army and Police). Ultimately, security in Afghanistan must be provided by a combination of military and police forces of sufficient strength in personnel, equipment, and training to cover security missions ranging from national defense to local policing.

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

Response: If confirmed it would be my intent to review current assessments and strategy, ensuring we produce an Integrated Civilian-Military Plan to fully integrate efforts. Within that plan, I would anticipate designating development of Afghan National Security Forces as our highest priority task, and focusing all our forces on effective execution of counterinsurgency operations.

Security Situation in Afghanistan

What is your assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan and the nature, size, and scope of the anti-government insurgency?

Response: The Afghanistan insurgency is Taliban dominated, but comprised of multiple groups including Al-Qaida pursuing various short and long term goals. Their common goals are to expel foreign forces from Afghanistan, undermine local and international

perceptions of security and to ultimately undermine the authority of the Afghan government. There is some operational cooperation between the Taliban and other insurgent networks. However, insurgent group identities are often blurred by overlapping operating areas and cooperation amongst tactical commanders in some areas of Afghanistan. Since 2004, the Taliban-led insurgency has continued to increase in scope, and its influence has expanded in some geographic areas despite significant losses in leadership and military engagements. In addition to the increasing quantity of attacks, insurgents have increased tactical proficiency and have adapted to Coalition countermeasures.

Violence levels have increased significantly over the last year. The increased U.S. force deployments in RC-South will likely result in higher violence levels in 2009 because of ISAF initiated operations against Taliban controlled areas. While some insurgents will choose to directly engage Coalition forces in contested areas, most will either reintegrate into the local population or relocate to more permissive areas in Afghanistan.

What is the nature and extent of the Al Qaeda threat in Afghanistan?

Response: Reports indicate that the scale and scope of Al-Qaida's operational presence on-the-ground in Afghanistan has increased – but remains limited in size. However, their partnership and support to Taliban insurgents cannot be discounted. Despite significant leadership losses and increased pressure on its safe havens in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Al-Qaida maintains the capability to plan, direct, and support attacks against Coalition forces in Afghanistan in 2009. Even with these losses, several Afghanistan-focused operatives and trainers remain at large and Al-Qaida's senior leadership structure is largely intact. Al-Qaida exploits multiple lines of facilitation (handlers) routes into the FATA, relying on facilitation networks for recruits' travel to the region.

What is your understanding of the extent to which the Taliban and Al Qaeda cooperate in Afghanistan?

Response: Despite occasional tensions between Pakistan-based al-Qaida senior leaders and the Quetta-based Taliban Senior Shura council, the two organizations maintain a mutually beneficial relationship characterized by tactical-level cooperation between al-Qaida operatives and Taliban commanders in Afghanistan. The nature of their relationship is unlikely to change. This relationship, based on historical ties (UBL), and overlapping regional goals, is durable—although continuing differences over strategic goals persist and intermittently provoke tensions between the two groups. Al-Qaida also continues to provide tactical expertise and training to Afghan insurgents, focused on suicide bombings, IEDs, VBIEDs, and some logistical support.

Coalition Capabilities

Do you believe that the current level of ISAF troops and equipment in Afghanistan is sufficient to carry out the ISAF mission? If not, what are the current shortfalls in troops and/or equipment required for that mission?

Response: The Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR) established the total force requirements for ISAF. Shortfalls exist which hamper ISAF's ability to carry out the mission to the full extent possible. Current shortfalls include various HQ elements, rotary wing support, lift and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) capabilities, and airborne Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets. If confirmed and once in theater, I will be in a better position to review the specific requirements for the mission and recommend adjustments to the CJSOR as appropriate.

Do you believe our NATO allies should be doing more to eliminate the shortfall in resourcing the NATO ISAF mission requirements?

Response: I appreciate the contributions and sacrifices of our allies and partners in this complex mission. Having stated that, I do believe that our allies could do more to meet the requirements in the CJSOR. If confirmed, one of my roles as COMISAF will be to actively campaign for capabilities and forces through the chain of command and when the opportunity presents itself with allied leadership.

If NATO members are unable to contribute additional military resources to the ISAF mission, do you believe those countries should contribute to the Afghanistan mission in other ways, and if so, how?

Response: By accepting the mission in Afghanistan, the nations that comprise NATO have agreed to share the burden of the mission and each one contributes military and civilian resources. Where nations are unable to contribute additional military resources to the CJSOR, I would ask that they contribute civilian advisors and assistance such as police trainers and governance mentors, as well as financially, through such mechanisms as the ANA Trust Fund. These aspects of the mission are just as critical to the overall success of the strategy in Afghanistan.

Command Structures in Afghanistan

What is your assessment of the current command structures for ISAF and for USFOR-A? What changes, if any, would you recommend to those command structures?

Response: I provide the following response without the benefit of having served inside the ISAF command structure. However, I believe that one area in which the current command structure falls short is the ability of COMISAF to concentrate on strategic and higher-level operational tasks, due to his direct role in providing day-to-day tactical-level direction to the Regional Commands.

I would recommend, in coordination with SHAPE, a relook of this command arrangement, with a possible 3-star level headquarters within the ISAF command structure to assume the role of directing the counter-insurgency operations of the Regional Commands. Such a headquarters would allow COMISAF to concentrate on strategic level tasks, the complexities of the civil-military integration, and engaging with the Afghan government, UNAMA, and the international community.

What is the justification for a U.S. chain of command separate from the NATO chain of command?

Response: A U.S. chain of command separate from NATO provides unified command and control of U.S. efforts outside the NATO mandate, such as ANSF development, detention operations, and counter-terrorism operations. A separate US command in theater provides unified execution and oversight of Title X responsibilities and national support for logistical, administrative, and intelligence activities.

Is it your understanding that if you are confirmed as Commander, USFOR-A, all U.S. forces in Afghanistan would be under your command?

Response: Yes, with very few exceptions the details of which are classified, all U.S. Forces are under my Command. However, the Command relationships are varied depending on the unit and its mission. For instance, while the majority of the combat forces conducting counterinsurgency operations are under the Operational Control of ISAF, I would still have Administrative Control (funding, justice, logistics, and intelligence activity supervision) over those units. Some units conducting operations under OEF mandate would be under my Operational Control. In addition, I would have Tactical Control of select Counter-Terrorism elements; while, US Central Command retains Operational Control over them.

The position of a three-star Deputy Commander, USFOR-A, has been established to oversee the day-to-day operations in Afghanistan.

Do you believe there is a need to dual-hat the Deputy Commander, USFOR-A, within the ISAF command structure to ensure proper coordination of ISAF forces throughout Afghanistan?

Response: I believe the optimal solution is to dual-hat the Deputy Commander, USFOR-A as the commander of a NATO, 3-star operational headquarters. This solution would allow one commander to direct ISAF tactical operations and ensure unity of effort where appropriate with USFOR-A/OEF operations. I recognize that this is a NATO decision and currently under consideration.

Building the Afghan National Security Forces

The Administration's new strategy calls for training and equipping the Afghan National Army to a level of 134,000 and the Afghan National Police to a level of 82,000, by 2011.

In your view will the currently-planned end strength levels for the ANA and ANP be sufficient to provide security and stability in Afghanistan or should these end strength levels be increased? If so, what levels would you recommend for the ANA and the ANP?

Response: The ANSF today (approximately 86,000 ANA and 82,000 ANP) is not of sufficient size to provide long-term security and stability for the people of Afghanistan. While I would need to make an on-the-ground assessment, at this time I do not believe the current authorized ANSF force levels (134,000 ANA and 86,800 ANP) are sufficient to provide this security.

There are two ongoing studies that will help inform our recommendations and decisions regarding the future size and capabilities of the ANSF. The European Community (EC) has commissioned a study, expected to be complete in mid-summer 2009, to assess the required capabilities of the Afghan National Police. The Secretary of Defense also directed that a detailed analysis, led by CENTCOM and the Joint Staff, be conducted in order to help us make informed recommendations on options for future end-strength and capabilities for both the ANA and the ANP. This study with assessed courses-of-action is due back to the Secretary by mid-June 2009. If confirmed, I will use the results of both of these studies and my own assessment to make recommendations to Secretary Gates on the future size and capabilities of the ANSF.

Traditionally, foreign internal defense (FID) and the security force assistance mission have been the responsibility of Special Operations Forces. Army and Marine Corps general purpose forces, however, have provided the bulk of the troops advising and assisting Afghan National Army and Police forces.

What is your assessment of the differences between Special Operations Forces and general purpose forces in performing the security force assistance mission?

Response: Both SOF and general purpose forces have a role in the development of the ANSF. Both must be involved in the training, partnering, and mentoring of ANSF at the appropriate unit level. Effective and steady ANSF development focused on bringing Afghan forces to a level where they can operate across the Shape, Clear, Hold, Build continuum with minimal to no US/Coalition support is a critical and essential aspect of the new strategy.

The specialized nature of SOF in the FID role provides unique and focused skills and training needed by ANSF as they become more advanced in their development as a security and COIN force. General purpose forces bring an order

of magnitude of capacity to the security force assistance mission that does not exist within our SOF. The skills and expertise of general purpose forces along with the larger size of these units provides the opportunity to ensure the ANSF are grounded in the essential basics of a professional military force as well as the opportunity to engage across a larger footprint of ANSF units on a sustained basis.

I believe the first foundation of any quality COIN force is a well trained and discipline soldier/policeman who understands the basics of his profession. GPF and SOF forces together provide that building block approach for ANSF development.

If confirmed, what plans do you have, if any, to employ Special Operations Forces and general purpose forces to advise and assist the Afghan National Army and Police?

Response: I support the current employment of both SOF and general purpose forces in training, partnering, and mentoring the ANSF. SOF provides mentors for the Afghan National Army Commando Kandaks (battalions) as well as some infantry kandaks. They also provide mentors for the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), a pilot program. General purpose forces provide mentors for the Afghan National Army and mentors along with civilian police experts for the Afghan National Police. Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A) coordinates the efforts of SOF and general purpose forces in order to ensure unity of effort.

If confirmed, what changes would you recommend, if any, with respect to the organizational, training, equipping, or deployment policies of general purpose forces performing the security force assistance mission?

Response: If confirmed I would work with CENTCOM, SHAPE, CJCS and our Service chiefs to ensure that all units that deploy to Afghanistan can conduct the full range of counter insurgency tasks as well as support ANSF development. As of this year, all US maneuver units are deploying with this dual capability. I would work to ensure that our allies and partners prepare and deploy their maneuver forces to do the same.

I would encourage increased language and cultural awareness training for all forces. I would seek one year tours for ministerial-level mentors and trainers like their ANA and ANP counterparts in order to establish the necessary relationships with their Afghan partners.

There remains a shortfall in the number of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) for training the Afghan National Army and for similar embedded training teams for building the capabilities of the Afghan National Police.

What should be done to encourage NATO allies to provide more OMLTs?

Response: I believe that there is already progress on the part of NATO to increase the number of OMLTs being provided. At the recent NATO Summit, Allied Heads of State and Governments all agreed on the importance of providing mentoring teams for Afghan security forces. There are several Allies, as well as non-NATO partners, who have pledged additional OMLTs to fill shortfalls, and although we don't have as many as we need yet, we're heading in the right direction.

What is your assessment of the Afghan National Police? What more should be done to build the ANP?

Response: The Afghan National Police continue to be challenged by corruption, lack of training, and overall capability. Minister of Interior Atmar recognizes these shortcomings and has identified acceleration of training, elimination of corruption, and force growth as his top priorities for the police. I recognize that Police training and reform is a joint effort between the US Departments of State and Defense, and the European Union Police Mission – Afghanistan (EUPOL). If confirmed I will work closely with Ambassador Eikenberry to support Minister Atmar's priorities to ensure that police training, reform and growth are properly aligned with other larger rule of law and security efforts.

The most critical shortcoming for ANP training has been the shortage of trainers and mentors. President Obama's decision in March to deploy 4,000 additional trainers to Afghanistan will help to address this shortfall. We must also continue to encourage our NATO partners to provide police mentors – especially in the districts where they are the battlespace owners and where we can create a real synergy of effort to develop a quality, respected police force. The US is already adopting this strategy with our COIN BCTs in the east and south providing additional police mentors.

What more can NATO and the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan do in your judgment to improve the effectiveness of the police?

Response: Reports indicate EUPOL has to date done well in the training of police forces and staffs on a provincial level. We must continue to support the organization and encourage greater capacity as they bring law and order, rule of law, and other police expertise to this effort. However, it is readily apparent that the true front lines of this conflict are on the district and urban police levels; Afghan police officers are suffering a much higher casualty rate at the hands of the insurgent forces than their Army counterparts. NATO recognizes this and recently approved the concept of a NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) geared towards the police force. This concept will allow nations to contribute police trainers, and in fact some Allies have already pledged personnel even though the details of this concept are still being vetted. I completely concur with the US recommendation for NTM-A to take on police institutional training and will aggressively encourage its application and development.

Challenges for Accelerating the Growth of the Afghan National Security Forces

Witnesses at Committee hearings have cited a number of challenges impeding the acceleration of expanding the Afghan National Security Forces, including: 1) a lack of training/mentoring teams to embed with Afghan units; 2) a lack of equipment; and 3) the challenge of developing leadership among officers and non-commissioned officers.

What in your assessment is the greatest challenge to accelerating the growth of the Afghan National Security Forces?

Response: I concur that the greatest international community challenge to accelerating the growth of the ANSF is the requirement for mentors for these forces. I also concur that the greatest Afghan challenge is the development of leadership for the expanded forces.

If confirmed, how would you recommend addressing this challenge?

Response: The President's decision in March to deploy the 4/82 Brigade Combat Team (BCT) to provide additional mentors for the Afghan National Security Forces will allow us to meet our ANA embedded training team requirements for the 134K Army and will significantly increase the number of ANP police mentor teams. US COIN BCTs are also assuming responsibility for police mentors in districts within their battlespace. We must continue to encourage our NATO partners to provide additional district mentors in order to build synergy for security within the battlespace and increase the number of districts with police mentor coverage. I also recommend encouraging NATO to use the proposed NTM-A as an opportunity to enhance its training and mentoring of the ANP.

Expanding the leadership capacity of the ANSF requires training and experience. Both the ANA and ANP have leadership development programs in place and if confirmed I will work with CSTC-A and the Ministries to identify efficiencies in both programs and also identify other ways to mitigate their leadership challenges. However, we must also recognize that leader development requires time and we must balance the pressing need for additional growth and progress in leadership with this reality in order to build forces that are self-sustaining over the long-term.

Afghan Public Protection Program

A pilot program called the Afghan Public Protection Program (APPP) has been launched in Wardak Province to empower local communities to provide for their own security, reportedly modeled on the Sons of Iraq program. Some experts have expressed concern, however, that the program risks strengthening local warlords.

What is your assessment of the APPP?

Response: As mentioned, and as a pilot program, the APPP is still in its early stages but assessments of the APPP up to this point have been positive. This pilot program has been closely coordinated among the Afghan Ministries of Interior and Defense, USFOR-A, and local Afghan authorities and community leaders. If confirmed, I would assess this program as part of the overall efforts to improve security.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the program? If confirmed, how would you seek to address those concerns?

Response: Connection to and the ability to secure the local population are key to the success of the program. We must ensure, without creating new tensions, the Ministry of Interior has the capability to provide the proper level and quality of oversight, the appropriate selection and training of the APPF, and the mutual commitment of community leaders and local authorities. Currently, the APPF is deployed in one district under the direct control of the local police chiefs with guidance and management provided by the MOI as well as the district and provincial governors. U.S. Forces continue to provide oversight and mentoring to the pilot program. Further, all members of the APPF are carefully selected through a collaborative community vetting process that involves not only village elders and shura leaders but key stakeholders from Government of Afghanistan. Ensuring the APPF is and remains connected to ANP at the local level is critical to avoid a return to ‘armed bands of warlords’. If confirmed I would review this process, and if it is effective, intend to continue it.

Counternarcotics

What is your assessment of the current U.S. and NATO strategies for combating the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics in Afghanistan? What changes, if any, would you make in those strategies if you are confirmed?

Response: The US and NATO military strategies and actions to combat the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics in Afghanistan are more robust now than before, but we clearly need to continue to improve. The corrosive effects of narcotics undermine all efforts to improve security, governance, and development in Afghanistan. A nexus exists between narcotics and the insurgency as well as corruption and criminality. Recent decisions by the NATO Defense Ministers and the Secretary of Defense, at the request of the Afghan Government, provided the guidance and authorities for both ISAF forces and the US Military to target the trafficking and production of narcotics where the nexus exists. Additionally, the recent change to DOD’s international counternarcotics policy enabled more robust support and integration of capabilities with civilian law enforcement agencies operating in Afghanistan.

I understand the U.S. government’s intent to rebalance its counternarcotics strategy and I support this effort because I don’t think that crop eradication alone is the right approach. I believe we need a multi-pronged approach that targets laboratories, traffickers and

movement of drugs, and facilitators at the same time we work to provide alternative income opportunities for farmers.

In December, Secretary Gates approved an expanded set of rules of engagement for U.S. forces combating narcotics in Afghanistan. NATO has reportedly approved a comparable expansion of the rules of engagement for NATO forces operating in Afghanistan.

What is your understanding of the reasons behind these changes in the counternarcotics rules of engagement and the impact of these changes in the rules of engagement?

Response: It is clear that a nexus exists between the insurgency and the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. Prior to Fall 2008, the US military's rules of engagement made it problematic to target those engaged in the drugs trade and providing support to insurgents. Also, military support to host nation and civilian law enforcement agencies was restricted by military commanders' interpretation of DOD's counternarcotics policy. The refinement of that policy was requested by the CENTCOM commander and in December 2008 a new policy was signed out that now fosters the integration of military support to law enforcement activities against the narcotics trade in Afghanistan. The guidance from the NATO Defense Ministers' meeting in November of 2008 resulted in the refinement of ISAF's Operational Plan (OPLAN) counternarcotics annex (Annex RR) rules of engagement to "take action in concert with the Afghans against facilities and facilitators of the narcotics trade supporting the insurgency."

When recently asked about what U.S. and NATO forces had done to stop the flow of opium and heroin, the Afghan Minister for Counternarcotics reportedly said "nothing." This response is deeply concerning particularly in light of the significant investment the American people have made in training Afghan counternarcotics forces.

Please discuss your assessment of U.S. and NATO operations to stop the flow of opium and heroin.

Response: In 2009 year to date, the Afghan security forces supported by ISAF and USFOR-A have made progress interdicting the narcotics trade with respect to last year. Destruction of labs, seizures of drugs and precursor chemicals, and targeting of facilitators have increased. However, the full impact of these interdiction efforts is not yet known. Our multi-pronged approach to CN must include a comprehensive assessment process.

In March 2009, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan carried out a joint counter-narcotics operation. The operation was part of a U.N. initiative, called the Rainbow Strategy, aimed at getting the three countries to carry out joint patrols and share intelligence on the members of the drug trade that process opium poppy into heroin and smuggle the drug to markets in Europe. The NATO Secretary General has discussed his

desire to boost these joint efforts to counteract the illegal drug trade and trans-border organized crime from Afghan territory.

Please discuss your views on the possibility of NATO and U.S. opportunities to cooperate with Iran in countering the narcotics trade in Afghanistan.

Response: Counternarcotics in Central Asia is a regional problem. In addition to Afghanistan, the negative effects of the drug trade are felt in Iran and Pakistan. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has cited the Iranians as being the most successful at interdiction in the region, seizing more than one-third of the opium smuggled out of Afghanistan through Iran (Source – UNODC report and recent comments by the UNODC Executive Director). These and other successful lesson could be shared between the Iranian and Afghan border security and law enforcement officials. This could be positive development and help improve stability in the region. As COMISAF I would work through Afghan officials to find opportunities to support the Afghanistan’s participation in this type of regional cooperation.

Mission Focus of Special Operations Forces

Some observers have contended that U.S. Special Forces operations and resources have been focused on “direct action” strategies aimed at killing or capturing insurgents, while foreign internal defense efforts emphasizing the protection of the Afghan people and training the Afghan security forces have taken a back seat.

What do you believe should be the proper balance between U.S. Special Forces operations and resources committed to direct action versus foreign internal defense, including intelligence, force levels, and logistics?

Response: Striking the appropriate balance between direct and indirect actions is critical. SOF is often wrongly perceived as focused on direct action, when in fact a top priority role for SOF in Afghanistan has always been its Foreign Internal Defense (FID) role in partnering and training Afghan National Security Forces. SOF is one contributing element to that goal, along with Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and our international partners. We work “by, with, and through” the Afghan government, because that is the only way to build necessary and sustainable capacity.

In your view, what should be the role of direct action operations in Afghanistan? Do you believe that direct action operations can defeat the Taliban?

Response: Disruption of terrorist and extremist groups relies in part on direct and focused counterterrorism actions. SOF units are trained and equipped to be the most lethal and precise operators in achieving this mission. Direct action remains an important aspect of disrupting our enemies, but it is neither the only role, nor the most important role, of SOF in Afghanistan. SOF is agile and adaptive, with unique skills in engaging indigenous and tribal groups, enabling our strategic communications through psychological operations,

and targeting developmental and economic improvements through civil affairs officers. Direct action operations alone can not defeat the Taliban but is crucial to the overall COIN strategy.

Do you believe that U.S. Special Forces have enough experts in the foreign internal defense mission in Afghanistan and are being used fully to train Afghan security forces to protect the population and win “hearts and minds”?

Response: By their very nature, SOF units are comparatively small in size and scope. They are specially trained to build and partner with indigenous security forces and to operate independently under austere conditions. We must optimize the limited SOF resources available to make maximize their impact in theatre by ensuring that they are used for those activities that support our strategic priorities and capitalize on SOF specialties.

In February 2009, a new 1-star SOF command was established to plan and synchronize direct and indirect activities to achieve a balanced approach to counter-insurgency (COIN) across Afghanistan.

Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command Afghanistan (CFSOCC-A) operates at the strategic-operational level and brings important resources and capacity to efforts in Afghanistan. These include high-level strategic guidance, synchronization of SOF throughout the Afghan theatre, enhanced support to SOF units, liaison with ISAF, the US Embassy, and other key elements of our national and international effort.

Reconstruction Efforts and Provincial Reconstruction Teams

If confirmed, what would be your role as Commander, ISAF, and COMUSFOR-A in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan?

Response: I would work to establish an integrated "whole of international community and whole of U.S. government approach" to reconstruction. I would work to establish comprehensive linkages between all lines of effort (security, governance, development, and strategic communications) the Government of Afghanistan, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the priorities of the Afghan people. I would ensure the efforts of our military forces are linked to those of the Afghan government, UNAMA, USAID, other national development agencies, and NGOs. I would also work to ensure that our efforts are sustainable, meaning that they are Afghan led and maintained, and respond to Afghan priorities. This requires capacity building at all levels of the Afghan government and must include constant engagement with local Afghan leaders and communities.

What is your assessment of the performance of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan?

Response: I believe that the Provincial Reconstruction Teams are of tremendous value and that they are making a difference across Afghanistan, many working with extremely limited resources. I'm aware that Congress legislated a report on measuring progress in the U.S. PRTs in the 2009 NDAA and that this report is still in final coordination within the Interagency. I look forward to its submission in order to help us better refine measures of effectiveness. If I am confirmed, assessing PRTs is one of my highest priorities with the intent of determining how we can improve on a concept that has had some remarkable successes.

What improvements, if any, do you believe need to be made in the operations or coordination of the U.S. and NATO Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan?

Response: As outlined earlier, if confirmed I need to conduct an assessment. My current belief is that we need to improve collaboration among all stakeholders to better synchronize our collective efforts. This collaboration includes the PRTs, the US and other partner Embassies, the Government of Afghanistan, and international aid/development organizations. I believe the most immediate need is linking these capacity building efforts down to the local level in partnership with the increases in forces this year. These efforts must operate in parallel so that capacity building and development efforts can be executed as soon as clearing operations permit.

What improvements, if any, do you believe need to be made in the coordination of military and civilian efforts to provide reconstruction relief and development and to enhance the governance capacity of the Afghan Government?

Response: There is an ongoing effort within the interagency to increase the number of civilian experts to build capacity in governance and development. I am also aware that the international community, the Government of Afghanistan, and the interagency are currently looking at the overall requirements for increased civilian capacity from the national down to the local levels. We are working with the interagency on how best to support and employ these civilian experts on the ground. We will not succeed if all we do is establish security and a strong military and police. The most crucial component is to get international and U.S. civilian experts on the ground to improve capacity in governance and development where we've made gains in security.

National Solidarity Program

One program that contributes to enhancing development and empowering governance at the local level in Afghanistan is the National Solidarity Program (NSP). This program provides block grants directly to locally-elected Community Development Councils, which are responsible for identifying, planning and managing their own development projects. Funding for the NSP comes from the World Bank/International Development Association, bilateral donors, and through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. According to its website, NSP has provided more than \$500 million in

payments to 21,000 Community Development Councils, which have financed more than 39,000 subprojects to improve access to infrastructure, markets, and services.

What is your understanding of the value of NSP in Afghanistan?

Response: The Government of Afghanistan created the National Solidarity Program (NSP) to allow local populations to identify, plan, manage and monitor its own development projects. As an important means of promoting rural development, the NSP empowers rural communities to make livelihood-affecting decisions. Its goal is to reduce poverty by strengthening a national network of self-governing community institutions which plans and implements development projects against local priorities.

The value of the NSP, as I understand it, is that it builds capacity at the community level and elevates and improves base competencies of local communities in financial management, procurement, technical skill, and transparency. Additionally, the Community Development Councils include and integrate women and other traditionally marginalized groups into the decision-making cycle at the local level. I believe its greatest value is that it strengthens society, empowers communities, and establishes trust and confidence in the government's ability to assist the people of Afghanistan.

Would you support expanding NSP as a means of building local governance and strengthening development?

Response: Yes, I would support expanding NSP as a means of building local governance and strengthening development, primarily because the Government of Afghanistan, as a sovereign nation, has implemented this initiative to address internal challenges. Since its inception in mid-2003, the NSP has become the Government of Afghanistan's main instrument for restoring and reconstructing the village social and economic infrastructure and is operating (or being established in) 359 of 364 districts and provincial centers throughout the 34 provinces in Afghanistan.

One of the US strategic objectives is to promote a more capable, accountable, and effective central government in Afghanistan that serves the Afghan people and can eventually function, particularly with regard to providing internal security, with limited international support. This program appears to be an effective method to help achieve that end.

Civilian Casualties

In your view, what can be done to reduce the levels of civilian casualties resulting from operations by coalition forces?

Response: In addition to the tragic loss of life, I am acutely aware of the negative repercussions resulting from civilian casualties. Any time an innocent person is killed our mission becomes harder and our men and women in Afghanistan fully understand

this dynamic. We have procedures in place to make every effort to avoid civilian casualties because our purpose is to protect the population. However, we are fighting an enemy who conducts operations specifically designed to produce casualties that can be attributed to Coalition forces. If confirmed, I intend to reiterate guidance on the use of force – emphasizing the importance of not alienating the population - and to continue to review ways to avoid civilian casualties.

What more needs to be done to address the level of civilian casualties in Afghanistan?

Response: As stated above, if confirmed I intend to continually refine our ways to avoid civilian casualties. In the event that they do occur, I believe it essential to rapidly engage Afghan government and local community leaders, make rapid compensation where appropriate and conduct joint investigations with Afghan authorities to ensure that the local population sees us as a responsible partner in their security and progress and that we have a common understanding of the events and how we can work together to avoid them.

Treatment of Detainees

Section 1403 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006 provides that no individual in the custody or under the physical control of the United States Government, regardless of nationality or physical location shall be subject to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

If confirmed, will you take steps to ensure that all relevant Department of Defense directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures applicable to U.S. forces in Afghanistan fully comply with the requirements of section 1403 and with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Response: Yes, I will. The United States has treated, and will continue to treat enemy combatants humanely and, to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity, in a manner consistent with the principles of international law and Common Article 3. They are provided with proper shelter and medical care. Each is allowed to exercise his religious beliefs, and is provided food consistent with his religious requirements.

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated September 5, 2006?

Response: I do support the standards outlined in the documents you quote and I will ensure that we continue to operate a safe, humane, legal, transparent and professional

enemy combatant detention operation that adheres to our obligations under U.S. and international law, and reflects the highest standards and values of the American people.

U.S. policy requires that all detainees--at all times--be treated humanely and, to the extent appropriate and consistent with military necessity, in accordance with the principles of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949.

How would you ensure a climate that not only discourages the abuse of detainees, but that encourages the reporting of abuse?

Response: U.S. policy condemns and prohibits torture and abuse of detainees. U.S. personnel are required to follow this policy and applicable law. All credible allegations of illegal conduct by U.S. personnel will be taken seriously and investigated.

Unfortunately criminal acts take place on the battlefield, just like they do in normal society. Fortunately, through improved training and education, substantiated allegations of abuse have decreased over time.

When new allegations arise in the future, I will continue to hold individuals accountable, investigate fully, and take appropriate disciplinary action. I will ensure that all in my chain of command understand they have a duty to report suspected abuse.

In the past two years, significant changes have been made in Iraq in the way detention operations have been conducted in a counterinsurgency environment, including through the establishment of reintegration centers at theater internment facilities.

Are you familiar with these changes in detention operations for conducting counterinsurgency operations “inside the wire”? If so, what do you consider to be the main lessons learned from the changes to detention operations in Iraq?

Response: The primary reason why we have been successful with "inside the wire" detention operations over the last few years is because of your support with the large increase in resources made available for our detention operations. Over the past year, the Department of Defense has constructed a Theater Internment Facility Reintegration Center (TIFRIC), which incorporates a detainee work program to teach valuable, marketable skills to enable detainees to reintegrate into Iraqi society. We have used detention facilities to learn why Iraqis join the insurgency so that the insurgents can be rehabilitated and turned into allies instead of enemies. We segregated extremists, nurtured moderates, and ensured first-rate care and custody for every detainee. We set out to counteract the motivations to join al-Qaida or the insurgency—such as cash incentives and fears of reprisal—and provide detainees with an alternative.

The TIFRIC and other detention facilities now provide rehab programs offering real skills and education like carpentry, textile manufacturing (sewing Bucca Bears and Cropper camels), painting, and limited use of automation, reinforced with moderate clerics

messaging has made the difference. In addition our enhanced family visitation programs take advantage of the detainees' web of relatives, friends, and tribesmen who then also benefit from his rehabilitation.

The critical first step in this successful program is to identify extremists and separate from moderates to enable rehabilitation of moderate and their eventual reintegration into society. We use military intelligence trained experts to analyze the detainee population and identify the radicals.

Once separated from extremists, we empower and rehabilitate moderates through education, vocational training, and paid work programs to give them the incentive and means to reintegrate into society.

If confirmed, what steps would you take to incorporate those lessons learned into detention operations in Afghanistan?

Response: Although Afghan society is in many respects different than Iraqi society, I believe many of the lessons learned from conducting Iraqi detention operations can be applied to Afghanistan.

If confirmed, I will establish, or where already in place, strengthen rehabilitation programs to:

- Separate and segregate the extremists.
- Develop a moderate understanding of Islam.
- Impart basic education and vocational skills.
- Continue family visitation and the use of extended family members and tribal associations to aid in a released detainee's abstention from violence.

I will establish a new review process to determine more quickly which detainees do not pose a substantial threat to US Forces and can be released immediately

I will work to provide increased transparency to media and international organizations, the government of Afghanistan, the ICRC, the UN, and families so they can see at first hand the high standard of care, the humane conditions, and the rehabilitation programs in order to actively counter-act misperceptions and propaganda about our detention facilities.

Finally, I will continue to provide care and custody with dignity and respect for every detainee with a guard force and staff dedicated to modeling and maintaining world class standards.

Safe Havens in Pakistan

The intelligence community assesses that Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the border with Afghanistan provide a safe haven for Al Qaeda and other extremists supporting the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan.

What should be done to prevent cross-border incursions by Al Qaeda and the Taliban from Pakistan into Afghanistan?

Response: Preventing all incursions is difficult due to the length and porous nature of the border. However, practical cooperation between Afghan, Pakistani, and international forces improves border security. Effective military operations in the Pakistani tribal areas are key to disrupt and eventually deny safe havens to Al Qaeda and the Taliban from which to launch these incursions.

ISAF and USFOR-A must continue to enhance the practical cooperation among ANSF, Pakistani military and international forces and increase the effectiveness of our counterinsurgency operations. Effective programs like Border and Joint Coordination Centers, Regular tripartite engagements at all levels, and counterinsurgency training Are essential to continued progress.

What role should ISAF forces play in countering this threat?

Response: ISAF operations are restricted to the country of Afghanistan. However, ISAF conducts extensive tripartite coordination at all levels from national command to local tactical units, which contribute to disrupting insurgents operating from safe havens in Pakistan. Despite political constraints from operating in Pakistan, ISAF should and is planning improvements in border security, ISR capacity, and tripartite coordination to interdict and disrupt cross-border operations by insurgents based in Pakistan.

What role should the Afghan National Army play in preventing cross-border attacks by extremist militants from Pakistan into Afghanistan?

Response: The Afghan Border Police (ABP) have primary responsibility for border security. The Afghan National Army provides direct support and support in depth to the ABP. Operational Coordination Centers (OCCs) are currently being established at the Regional and Provincial levels to improve information sharing and synchronization of efforts.

In your view, should the Pakistan Government be doing more to prevent these incursions?

Response: The Pakistani military is currently conducting operations against extremist elements in Pakistan. We must continue to support their efforts, encourage operations in the tribal areas against insurgent safe havens, and persuade them to improve their military counterinsurgency capability.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Cooperation

What is your assessment of the current level of cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan in confronting the threat of militant extremists in the border region?

Response: There are encouraging signs that the Pakistani Government's most recent efforts against extremists in Western Pakistan are, in part, facilitated by expanded cooperation with Afghanistan and international forces. This coordination has expanded at political and military levels and if confirmed, I will make every effort to maintain positive momentum.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you have for improving security cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan?

Response: I will continue to support the mechanisms we already have in place such as the Tripartite Commission, border security meetings, the Border and Joint Coordination Centers and other relationships that enhance the cooperation of all parties involved in this fight. I will also support other cooperative mechanisms where appropriate and the efforts of the international community to build regional security. More specifically, I would like to see an expansion in information and intelligence sharing; conduct pre-planned operations that are mutually supporting; and continue to build on the foundation of political cooperation which is maturing every day.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response in Afghanistan

Numerous cases of sexual misconduct involving military personnel in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan have been reported over the last several years. Many victims and their advocates contend that they were victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate military treatment. They assert that the Command failed to respond appropriately by providing basic services, including medical attention and criminal investigation of their charges.

What is your understanding of the resources and programs in place in Afghanistan to offer victims of sexual assault the medical, psychological, and legal help that they need?

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

I am aware that a number of recommendations were made to USCENTCOM in the Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2008 Report on Sexual Assault in the Military, released in March. These included deploying Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates and outfitting larger field hospitals with Sexual Assault Forensic Examination kits for evidence collection. Initial, independent Service responses to these recommendations may have created areas where duplicative support structures exist. In these instances, opportunities may exist to better pool and employ resources to optimize coverage and improve response. If confirmed, I will look more closely at available resources and find ways to improve support to sexual assault victims.

Also, the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services is currently evaluating how effectively the Services are implementing the DoD sexual assault policy and procedures. They interviewed key sexual assault responders currently deployed in Afghanistan, including chaplains, counselors, medical and legal personnel, and Criminal Investigations Division agents regarding how they handle cases of sexual assault. In addition, the Task Force has surveyed Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates in Afghanistan regarding the level of resources and support they have, and regarding the effectiveness of restricted reporting in the deployed environment. Their findings and recommendations will be reported to SECDEF later this year. If confirmed, I will ensure that all of the recommendations are considered for implementation within Afghanistan.

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

What is your view of steps the Command has taken to prevent sexual assaults in Afghanistan?

Response: If I am confirmed, I will need to assess this. I am aware that a Congressionally mandated DoD Task Force on Sexual Assault is currently reviewing sexual assault to include an assessment of response capabilities in Afghanistan. I look forward to their report.

Currently, it is my understanding that DoD policy guidance is in place in theater for the prevention of sexual assault which includes reporting procedures and command responsibilities. As we increase our presence in the area, I will ensure that our Sexual Assault resources are sufficient to respond to any incidents that may occur. But my primary objective will be to implement preventive measures through training and leadership involvement.

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

Response: The military services have primary responsibility for the sexual assault response personnel deployed to Afghanistan to ensure they are well trained to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault. My expectation is that Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARCs) and Victim Advocates are designated for every operating area and are committed to providing the best care possible for deployed victims.

Additionally, each of the military services have identified investigative resources in deployed areas. However, as you may imagine, the combat environment and deployed operations are very dynamic. The investigative resources are often strained by other mission requirements. Access to resources may be complicated by remoteness of locations, availability of transportation to and from those areas or the level of ongoing operations. I believe the DoD training network in place now prepares them and investigators to handle sexual assault cases in a caring, responsive and professional manner. Our ability to respond and support victims is paramount.

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

Response: I believe current policies and procedures have improved care to victims of sexual assault. However, restricted reporting limits a commanders' ability to support the victim, investigate and/or hold alleged offenders accountable.

Restricted reporting allows a sexual assault victim to confidentially receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigation process. Personnel may make a restricted report to the SARC, Victim Advocate or health care professional. Communications with chaplains also are confidential.

Unrestricted reporting supports a sexual assault victim who desires medical treatment, counseling but also provides for official investigation of his or her allegations within existing administrative reporting channels (such as their chain of command, law enforcement or through the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC)).

Although the use of restricted, or confidential, reporting doesn't allow a commander to investigate alleged assaults, it does allow a sexual assault victim to confidentially receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigation process.

As our military members' confidence in the reporting and investigative policies and procedures improve, I believe more alleged offenders can be held accountable. The greatest effect still lies in preventive measures and eliminating sexual assaults.

What problems, if any, are you aware of regarding the manner in which the confidential reporting procedures have been put into effect?

Response: In Afghanistan, I suspect that privacy for restricted and unrestricted reporting becomes a challenge in a deployed environment where units are small communities where accountability of personnel is a critical task for units. It becomes more difficult for the victim to reach out to the SARC or a victim advocate because of the need to keep track of all personnel movements within the theater and that support resources may not be co-located with the victim. The joint deployed environment could present additional difficulties in case management, delivering care and tracking services due to differences among Service programs. It is my understanding that the DoD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office is working to field a Joint Sexual Assault Database to improve our ability to communicate between the services. The database is currently projected for fielding in 2010.

Mental Health of Servicemembers and Stress on the Force

The Committee is concerned about the stress on military personnel resulting from lengthy and repeated deployments and their access to mental health care to deal with this increased stress. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff recently said that the shooting of five service members at a stress control clinic by a troubled Army sergeant in Iraq speaks to “the need . . . to redouble our efforts” and “the issue of multiple deployments” and increasing dwell time “to try to improve to relieve that stress.” This tragic incident, as well as increasing suicide rates in every service, are clear reminders that servicemembers, particularly those who have been deployed multiple times, are under tremendous stress and need access to mental health care.

In your view, are there sufficient mental health assets in theater to address the mental health needs of the military personnel who are serving in Afghanistan?

Response: Trying to assign a number or percentage of fill to define the sufficiency of assets does not accurately portray the complexity of the mental health issues or the individual needs of our forces on the ground as we continue to support operations in Afghanistan. I am aware of multiple efforts across the DoD that are looking at the issue of mental health assets in theater and most have shown that we need to have a change in both provider quantity and distribution, favoring increasing providers and stationing them closer to the line troops. Additionally, we must continue to evaluate and increase the availability of care for our service members assigned to Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, who are traditionally not going to be co-located with or near our US bases. I can assure you that I will work to make resilience training and mental health care available to every man and woman under my command and I will leave no stone unturned to get those capabilities to them as soon as possible. The DoD has made huge strides in our combat capabilities leveraging advanced technologies and I see no reason why we cannot bring those lessons learned into the medical and behavioral health arena, such as expanding our telemedicine capabilities to address the needs of our more remote outposts. Without a doubt, these issues will need to be handled with great care

and respect for the sacrifices and incredible work of our brave men and women who deploy to this very challenging environment.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to address the mental health needs of military personnel serving in Afghanistan?

Response: First, let me say that the responsibility for the mental health and fitness of the forces under my command will fall on me and my subordinate commanders. This issue is not simply a medical matter but a complex topic that requires a team response and a coordinated effort. Commanders must set the right command climate, not only to remove the stigma of asking for and receiving care for psychological injury, but to build cohesive teams, recognize the need for prevention and identification of problems -- as well as having the right resources in place when problems do arise. When behavioral health problems do surface, as they do in any population of human beings -- not just in combat troops -- we should be ready to address those. I am aware of the multiple efforts under way within the DoD to increase the number of behavioral health providers in theater. I support these efforts. In addition, it is critical to point out that mental health is not simply a numbers issue but an asset distribution issue as well. We need to make sure everybody gets taken care of and not just the people on the large bases. That means pushing behavioral health assets forward to embed with the line units; in other cases, it may involve leveraging our telecommunications assets to get to those very small and remote operating bases. If I have to make more bandwidth available to support those remote locations with mental health access then that is what I am going to do. In any case, I plan to look at the problem carefully and not simply go with the path of least resistance or most conventional choice -- I'll do whatever it takes to maintain a fit and ready force both in body and spirit.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Response: Yes

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

Response: Yes

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and

necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the ISAF Commander/Commander, USFOR-A?

Response: 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?

Response: 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?

Response: Yes