

**Advance Questions for Lieutenant General John R. Allen**  
**Nominee to be Commander, International Security Assistance Force and**  
**Commander, United States 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)?**

The Commander of ISAF (COMISAF) is the senior NATO uniformed officer in Afghanistan. He is the in-theatre operational commander of all ISAF forces in Afghanistan and is tasked with: (a) employing assigned forces and conducting population-centric counterinsurgency operations; (b) enabling an expanded and effective ANSF capable of fighting their own counterinsurgency; (c) providing support to governance and development efforts to protect the Afghan people and to provide a secure environment for sustainability; and (d) evaluating ISAF security, governance, and development support activities.

ISAF is a NATO-directed operation conducted under UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1386 (2001), which authorizes the establishment of ISAF to assist the Afghan government in maintaining security in Kabul and surrounding areas and to take all necessary measures to fulfill this mandate.

Following a UN and NATO/North Atlantic Council agreement, NATO assumed strategic command of ISAF on 11 August 2003 under the authority of UNSCR 1386 and successor UNSCRs. Subsequently, UNSCR 1510 (2003) geographically expanded the ISAF mandate established in UNSCR 1386 to cover all of Afghanistan.

**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?**

The Commander of USFOR-A is the senior U.S. officer in Afghanistan with duties distinct from his duties as Commander, ISAF. Commander, USFOR-A exercises National Command Element and National Support Element authorities and responsibilities ensuring that U.S. forces have the guidance, equipment, and funding they need to conduct their missions. He ensures unity of effort among all U.S. forces including those under the ISAF command and those forces not under ISAF command, such as those U.S. forces conducting U.S. detention operations and U.S. counter-terrorism operations.

COMISAF employs the forces that troop-contributing nations provide to ISAF. The United States remains the largest troop-contributing nation to ISAF. The Commander, USFOR-A, directs and oversees the United States' military contributions within ISAF. COMISAF ensures that the operations of all troop-contributing nations, including those of U.S. forces, are coordinated.

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

Since the chain of command for the Afghanistan theater runs through Central Command, as the deputy commander of U.S. Central Command from 2008-2011, I had the opportunity to work very closely on Afghanistan. During that time, I traveled to Afghanistan multiple times as well as other countries in the Central Command Area of Operations, including Pakistan. As a result, and if confirmed, I believe I understand Afghanistan and the region and also believe that my personal relationships with senior military and government leaders in the region will contribute to my ability to perform my duties at ISAF.

I also served as the deputy commanding general of the II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) when it deployed to Iraq's Anbar Province from 2007-2008. That experience not only prepared me for battlefield command and the harsh reality of war, but it also taught me a tremendous amount about the nature of this kind of conflict and the complex challenges unique to counterinsurgencies. This was driven home in particular during the "Anbar Awakening," which occurred during my time in Iraq.

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

I believe that a professional military officer should never stop learning. I believe that my experiences have prepared me for this position, but, if confirmed, I will constantly educate myself about the strategic environment so that I can lead a force that is resilient and adaptive to the ever-changing battlefield – key requirements in this kind of conflict.

**Relationships**

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

**The Secretary of Defense**

The Commander, USFOR-A reports to the Commander, USCENTCOM who, in turn, reports directly to the Secretary of Defense. This reporting relationship is prescribed in 10 USC Section 164(d)(1). COMISAF does not have a formal relationship with the Secretary of Defense because COMISAF reports to the NATO chain of command (Commander, Joint Forces Command – Brunssum), who reports to SACEUR.

**The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

The Commander, USFOR-A does not have a formal command relationship with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but he coordinates with him through the Commander, USCENTCOM

on a regular basis. The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. Although he is the nation's senior military officer, the Chairman is not in the chain of command. The Commander, USFOR-A sends his advice and opinions on military operations to the Commander, USCENTCOM who, in turn, presents them to the Chairman.

### **NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe**

NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, is the NATO strategic-level commander of all NATO forces, including those assigned to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. He provides Commander, Joint Forces Command Brunssum (JFC-B), with strategic guidance and direction. JFC-B is NATO's operational level command that is responsible for the mission in Afghanistan. In turn, Commander, JFC-B, directs COMISAF with respect to SACEUR's and JFC-B's campaign objectives and COMISAF's performance of key military and supporting tasks, as mandated by the North Atlantic Council.

### **Commander, U.S. Central Command**

The Commander, USFOR-A works very closely with the Commander, USCENTCOM on all aspects of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

By law, the Commander, USFOR-A reports directly to the Commander, USCENTCOM. The Commander, USCENTCOM exercises authoritative direction and control over all U.S. Forces in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, which includes all U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. The Commander, USCENTCOM provides authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics. He has delegated National Command Element and National Support Element authority and responsibilities to the Commander, USFOR-A.

### **Commander, NATO Training Mission—Afghanistan/Commander, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan**

Commander, NTM-A/CSTC-A reports to COMISAF/Commander, USFOR-A.

NTMA/CSTC-A is a subordinate HQ to both HQ ISAF and HQ USFOR-A. The CSTC-A element retains its U.S.-only character primarily for funding and administrative authorities, and responds to the U.S. chain of command. The NAC established NTM-A in April 2009, and it was merged into CSTC-A in March 2010 under a dual-hatted commander.

### **Commander, ISAF Joint Command**

Commander, ISAF Joint Command (IJC), reports to COMISAF. IJC is ISAF's operational-level command and is subordinate to HQ ISAF. IJC was established in November 2009. The IJC Commander is also dual-hatted as the Deputy Commander, USFOR-A, and retains certain U.S. command authorities.

### **U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan**

The Commander, USFOR-A provides operational assistance and advice, to include U.S. military views and recommendations, to the U.S. Ambassador. He maintains a close working relationship with the Ambassador to ensure that military and civilian efforts are synchronized and mutually supporting. This is particularly important in the Rule of Law arena where the Department of State has the lead for the United States Government. The Commander, Combined Joint-Interagency Task Force 435 (who reports directly to the Commander, USFOR-A), provides support to the Ambassador for Rule of Law and Law Enforcement, who reports directly to the U.S. Ambassador.

### **The Secretary General of NATO**

The NATO Secretary General chairs the North Atlantic Council, the highest political authority in NATO, responsible for the overall decisions and direction of NATO policy and operations. The North Atlantic Council is comprised of ambassador-level representatives of all NATO members, including the United States. The Council is advised on military matters and the conduct of operations by the Military Committee, which is also composed of senior military representatives from each member state. The Council, under the Secretary General's leadership, provides overall direction and guidance to the military chain of command. In practical terms, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) leads all NATO military operations and advises NATO's Military Committee. Thus, in the case of the ISAF mission, the Secretary General, following consultations and decisions by the North Atlantic Council, provides guidance and direction to SACEUR through the Military Committee, and the SACEUR communicates those directives and guidance through NATO's military chain of command. COMISAF and the Secretary General confer and consult regularly, including formal updates to the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council on the progress of military operations in Afghanistan.

### **NATO Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan**

The NATO Senior Civilian Representative-Afghanistan (SCR) is the civilian counterpart to COMISAF. As the NATO Secretary General's direct representative in Afghanistan, the SCR is charged with carrying forward the political aspects of NATO's engagement in Afghanistan. Although there is no formal command relationship, the SCR and COMISAF work in close concert and with full transparency following the North Atlantic Council approved Terms of Reference for the SCR and SACEUR and Commander JFC-B's guidance for COMISAF. In short, this cooperative relationship is critical to underwrite NATO's operational military and political engagement in Afghanistan and can help to improve cooperation between ISAF and international civilian agencies in Afghanistan.

### **United Nations Special Representative in Afghanistan**

UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Afghanistan is an important leader in the international community's efforts in Afghanistan. While no command relationship exists between COMISAF and the UN SRSG, the ISAF mission was authorized by UN Security Council Resolution to assist the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment. Similarly, the UN SRSG has a mandate to lead the UN Assistance Mission in

Afghanistan (UNAMA) in supporting the Afghan government in its efforts to improve critical areas, including security, governance, economic development, and regional cooperation, as well as to support the full implementation of mutual commitments made on these issues at the London Conference in January 2010 and the subsequent Kabul Conference in July 2010. The SACEUR OPLAN states that COMISAF is expected to work in close coordination with both the NATO SCR and the UN SRSG. These partnerships support efforts to work with the Afghan government to ensure progress towards the goal of a self-sufficient Afghanistan.

### **Afghanistan-Pakistan Strategy and Major Challenges**

**In his speech at West Point in December 2009, the President formulated his strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan.**

**Do you agree with that strategy?**

Yes.

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

Significant challenges will persist in Afghanistan. Among them, the Taliban will seek to recover lost ground, particularly in the south and southwest. Insurgent organizations such as the Haqqani network will continue to threaten our ability to secure some of the population in the east and will also seek to conduct high-profile attacks in the capital region. Transnational terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda will seek to establish new bases and safe havens in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Corruption and other challenges to good governance will need to be addressed. Finally, although the mission is on track, there will be challenges as we build the Afghan National Security Forces to the point where they can assume full responsibility for Afghanistan's security.

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

We must continue to focus on protecting the population, degrading the insurgency, and developing Afghan security forces that can assume more responsibility. Additionally, we have to continue – and, in some cases – expand our efforts on issues ranging from security to good governance and Rule of Law. For example, we have to continue building layered defenses to prevent insurgent infiltration from Pakistan and we also have to continue working with our Afghan partners to address corruption. If confirmed, I will work closely with international, Afghan, and Pakistani partners on all lines of effort of the campaign plan to maintain and accelerate the momentum that our campaign has generated.

**On June 22, 2011, the President announced his decision regarding the beginning of reductions of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and the size and pace of reductions through 2012.**

**Do you agree with the President's decision to begin reducing U.S. forces in July 2011?  
Why or why not?**

Although I was not a participant in the discussions about the various options, I agree with the President's decision to begin reducing forces. The troops that will be redeployed in July represent the fulfillment of the President's commitment to both resource the strategy he enunciated at West Point but also to demonstrate to Afghan leadership the urgency of increased Afghan National Security Force strength and capability to assume its proper role in securing Afghanistan. In the context of our longer-term goal of transitioning security responsibility to Afghans by the end of 2014, this reduction reflects an inflection point alongside the commencement of transition, scheduled to begin next month.

**Do you agree with the President's decision announced on June 22<sup>nd</sup> regarding the size and pace of reductions in U.S. forces? Why or why not?**

Yes, I agree with the President's decision. Of course, I will constantly monitor and assess the situation on the ground and, should I determine the situation has changed, I will so advise my chain of command through the proper channels.

It is also important to bear in mind that, even once the surge forces are removed, there will still be more than 68,000 U.S. troops and thousands of international forces in Afghanistan – not to mention the addition of some 70,000 Afghan forces, which will join the fight during the next 15 months. At the same time, the international community has demonstrated its intention to support Afghanistan until at least 2014, and the U.S. and NATO are both discussing some form of long-term partnership relationship with Afghanistan. I believe this reality sends an important message of commitment to the Afghan people, as well as a sense of urgency that the Afghans must take on more responsibility for securing their own country.

**Security Situation in Afghanistan**

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

Based on my understanding of the situation on the ground, I believe that the momentum that the insurgency enjoyed for a number of years has been halted in most of the country and reversed in many key areas. For example, violence is 5 percent lower so far year in comparison to last year, and it is down 40 percent in Regional Command Southwest. Obviously, we are facing a very resilient insurgency that has demonstrated continued lethal capacity as well as the ability to regenerate over time. That said, the ongoing maturation of Afghan National Security Forces, combined with the beginning of transition in July, should help to further pressure the enemy by degrading support networks and further reduce support for the enemy among the Afghan population. We and our Afghan partners still face numerous challenges, and there will be more tough fighting in the years ahead as we transition security to Afghan lead by the end of 2014.

**In your view, what is the impact of the death of Osama bin Laden on the security situation in Afghanistan?**

We do not yet know what effect, if any, bin Laden's death will have on enemy operations and morale among insurgents in Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially at the operational and tactical level. The reality is that we still face very resilient enemies who will continue to try to establish safe havens from which they can expand their influence and from which they can target the governments, forces, and people of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the forces and diplomats of all of the nations contributing to the mission.

**Transition of Security Responsibility**

**In March President Karzai announced the first tranche of provinces and municipal districts designated for the transition of lead responsibility for security to the Afghanistan security forces. The transition of security responsibility in these areas is to begin in July and be completed by the end of 2011.**

**Do you support the process established by NATO and the Government of Afghanistan for designating areas for transition of security lead to the Afghan security forces, including an initial round of transition to be completed by the end of 2011?**

Yes, I believe that the comprehensive, collaborative process established to identify areas for transition is working as intended. If confirmed, I will look closely at our transition planning and implementation and make any changes I believe will increase the effectiveness of the process. The first tranche is on schedule to begin transition next month, and I support moving forward with the timelines that have been established. As the first tranche begins to transition, there will likely be lessons learned that can be incorporated into future transition planning and implementation.

**What is your assessment of the capacity of the Afghan security forces to assume the lead for security in the areas designated for this initial round of transition?**

Based on my understanding of the current size and capability of Afghan security forces, I believe that Afghans are prepared to assume the lead for security in the areas designated in the first tranche. In some cases, such as Kabul and Panshir, Afghan security forces are already in the lead and have been for some time.

**Building the Afghan National Security Forces**

**There are approximately 100,000 more Afghan soldiers and police now than there were in November 2009. The strategy for training and equipping the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) calls for growing the Afghan National Army (ANA) to a level of 171,000 and**

**the Afghan National Police (ANP) to a level of 134,000 by October 2011. In addition, a new ANSF target end strength has been set of 352,000 by 2012.**

**In your view, are the target end strength levels for the ANA and ANP sufficient to provide security and stability in Afghanistan?**

If the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board approves the 352,000 ANSF target end-strength, then I believe the ANA and ANP should be capable of achieving the goal outlined at the November 2010 Lisbon Summit of Afghans in the lead for security by the end of 2014. However, as the NATO Secretary General has stated, the training mission in Afghanistan will likely extend beyond our combat mission as part of an enduring partnership with Afghanistan.”

**What in your view are the greatest challenges to building the capacity of the ANSF to assume responsibility for Afghanistan’s security?**

Based on my understanding, there are five main challenges to building ANSF capacity.

**Leadership:** Leader development is one of our top priorities since good leadership provides the foundation upon which any organization develops and improves. Even though we have significantly expanded leadership training and development efforts, there are still shortfalls, especially since it takes substantially more time to train, educate, and develop leaders. With the growth of the force over the last year, the training mission has been able to focus more efforts on leader development as well as professionalization across the force.

**Attrition:** Attrition within the ANSF continues to be a challenge. Through ISAF’s partnership with the ANSF at the ministerial and unit levels, there has been some success at reducing attrition rates. If confirmed, I will ensure that ISAF continues to work with our Afghan partners to address this problem and to develop new initiatives to reduce ANSF attrition.

**Insider Threat:** To safeguard against infiltration and co-option by insurgents, the ANSF has developed a multi-layered defense, which starts with an eight-step vetting process for all new recruits joining the police and army. The addition of Afghan counter-intelligence personnel into the formations, as well as additional education and training on identifying threats, is intended to minimize this risk.

**Logistics:** Logistics and maintenance capabilities are required to ensure ANSF can sustain itself over the long-term, which is particularly important as Afghans assume more responsibility for security. We are working with the Afghan government to field these enabling forces, but developing these specialized skills is complex and time-consuming.

**Literacy:** Literacy is the essential enabler for professionalization of ANSF, although it is a challenge in a nation with a 15 percent literacy rate. Since November 2009, over 100,000 ANSF have completed some level of literacy training, and we have increased these efforts recently, with some 70,000 ANSF in literacy training on any given day. Training is focused on developing the



basic ability to read and write so that ANSF can, for example, properly account for material, write reports, and read pay statements.

**There remains a shortfall in the number of training personnel required for the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan (NTM-A), in terms of both institutional trainers and embedded training teams, the so-called Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs) and Police OMLTs (POMLTs).**

**What is your understanding of the current shortfall in NTM-A institutional trainers and OMLTs and POMLTs?**

There is currently a shortfall of 490 NTM-A institutional trainers, which is a significant improvement over the last few months. Despite additional pledges at the ISAF Force Generation Conference in May, we remain short of OMLTs and POMLTs, particularly in Regional Commands North, West, and Central. The partnering shortfall within the Afghan National Army remains at 10 units (Turkey has offered an additional OMLT for 2nd Brigade HQ, 111th Capital Division, which may alleviate some of these shortfalls). ISAF Joint Command is examining ways to potentially thin partnering relationships with more capable army units to mitigate these shortfalls. With the Afghan National Police, there is a shortfall of 88 units in Key Terrain Districts and Areas of Interest. There is an additional shortfall of 137 POMLTs in low priority locations, and we are looking at ways to reduce this shortfall using non-military assets.

Also of note, these shortfalls reflect 305,600 ANSF end-strength; when the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meets later this year, it is expected to endorse the growth of the force to 352,000 personnel, which may impact the nature, if not the number, of required OMLTs and POMLTs. Given the importance of the training mission to the overall campaign, filling all of these shortfalls is critical to the long-term success of our operations.

**Are there additional steps that you believe could or should be taken to get NATO and other coalition partners to provide more institutional trainers?**

Training shortfalls are a long-standing issue best addressed by continued engagement with our partners by all elements of the U.S. government – including Congress – as well as by NATO/SHAPE HQ, HQ ISAF, and representatives of the NATO training mission. Contributing nations who have operational commitments should be encouraged to reinvest any combat troop reductions with trainers, especially ones with specialized skills such as police, logisticians, medical and maintenance specialists. Even as we solicit more trainers, we are also developing more Afghan trainers, which allows us to remission coalition trainers.

**Are there additional steps that you believe could or should be taken to encourage NATO and other coalition partners to meet the requirements for additional OMLTs and POMLTs?**

As noted above, continuous engagement by all elements of the U.S. government as well as NATO and other relevant organizations represents the best chance of generating more OMLT and POMLT pledges.

### **Partnering with Afghan Security Forces**

**A key component of efforts to build the capacity of Afghan security forces is partnering ANSF units together with ISAF units in the field. A recent DOD report states that field reports suggest that a partnership ratio of greater than 3 ISAF personnel to one ANSF personnel “reduces the effectiveness of the ANSF’s participation” and that “ANSF are more motivated and, hence, more effective when the partnership ratio [between ISAF and ANSF personnel] is closer to even.”**

**What is your assessment of the effectiveness of partnering for building the capacity of the Afghan Army and Afghan police?**

The process and practice of partnering is critical to building the capacity Afghan security forces so that Afghans can assume the lead for security across the country by the end of 2014. Over the past year and a half, we have made significant strides with our baseline training. At the same time, we have focused substantially on increasing our partnership efforts since this has proven to be the most effective way of increasing Afghan capability, confidence, and professionalism in the field. In fact, we have seen the most rapid improvements in our Afghan counterparts in places where we have higher partnering ratios and where our troops live and fight alongside their Afghan partners. It is also worth noting that partnering increased our own effectiveness since Afghan forces understand the human and cultural terrain in ways that we do not.

**Do you believe that the partnering of ISAF and ANSF forces can move to a partnership ratio below 1:1 (fewer than 1 ISAF soldier for every ANSF soldier) as the capability of Afghan security forces improves?**

Yes, that is precisely what we intend to do as we transition security responsibility. Over time, we will move from partnered operations, to operations with Afghans in the lead with our forces in support, to operations where we are in a strategic over-watch position. For example, we would help offer advice on planning and enabling, but Afghans would carry out the operation by themselves. Eventually we plan to move to complete Afghan control. Many units are already below a 1:1 partner ratio, and there are increasingly more areas where Afghans are in the lead or operating independently. For example, Afghans have assumed more responsibility as our forces have thinned out in parts of the central Helmand river valley, and Afghan forces comprise the majority of forces around Kandahar City. And in Kabul Province, Afghans lead almost all operations.

## **Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan**

**In your view, what is the appropriate role of special operations forces in Afghanistan, and the proper relationship between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations there?**

Special operations forces in Afghanistan are a vital component of our overall counterinsurgency strategy, and play many critical roles in our overall campaign. Special operations strike forces, supported by intelligence and other enablers, are essential for attacking insurgent networks to capture or kill insurgent leaders. Special forces teams that are part of the Combined Forces Special Operations Command-Afghanistan are essential to the support of Village Stability Operations and the mentoring of the Afghan Local Police, primarily in smaller villages and rural areas. The multinational special forces teams in the ISAF Special Operations Force provide essential training and partnering to Afghan specialized Provincial Response Companies to facilitate targeted missions against insurgent, drug trafficking, and other networks. Each of these elements also partners with, trains, and assists the Afghan units with which they are working – a critical component of increasing Afghan capabilities. All special operations forces coordinate closely with the conventional force battle space owner in the region in which they operate so that special operations missions complement conventional force operations to achieve the overall counterinsurgency effect. Counterterrorism operations are an important component of any comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign.

**As U.S. forces are drawn down in Afghanistan, do you anticipate the requirement for special operations forces will be reduced, stay the same, or increase?**

Although the exact future requirements for special operations forces are yet to be determined, they will clearly play a prominent role in the future.

## **Afghan Local Police/Village Stability Operations**

**General Petraeus and others have emphasized the importance of the Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police programs to the strategy in Afghanistan.**

**What has been the effect of these programs on rural Afghan populations and what has been the response from the Taliban?**

The Afghan Local Police (ALP) program and Village Stability Operations (VSO) have had a measurable and positive effect on security in Afghanistan. Since the program's inception in August 2010, ALP has grown to over 6,500 patrolmen operating at 41 validated sites. These units provide a measure of security where ISAF forces are scarce or non-existent, and build connections between the village, the province, and the central government. Additionally, the program appears to have jump-started local governance and also mobilized communities, a key condition for local populations to resist Taliban influence. Because this program has been so effective in denying terrain to the Taliban, the enemy has explicitly targeted it (although it

appears that ALP members have fought off Taliban attacks in a number of recent incidents). Nonetheless, the ALP program and VSO continue to grow, and Afghans across the country are eager for the program to come to their area.

**Do you believe the availability of U.S. special operations teams is a limiting factor in expanding these programs to a point where they can have a strategic impact in Afghanistan?**

The number of ALP and VSO sites that we can establish in Afghanistan is limited by the availability of Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams, but we have developed an innovative solution that allows us to continue to expand the programs without additional teams. We have begun integrating conventional forces with our special forces, which, after a period of specialized training, are able to thicken the ODAs and free up more special forces personnel for new ALP/VSO missions. We expect that this will allow us to continue to increase the ALP program, even as the number of ODAs in Afghanistan remains fairly constant.

**How do indirect approaches like Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police Programs complement direct action counterterrorism missions within the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan?**

The ALP and VSO programs are part of the comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency strategy and, as such, they complement other efforts – both kinetic and non-kinetic – to protect the population, to degrade the insurgency, and to build sustainable, effective governance in Afghanistan. By giving local villagers a stake in their own security, the ALP program builds cooperation and support for the district, provincial and central government, which, in turn, makes the environment inhospitable to the Taliban and other insurgent groups. The local security and improved governance that the ALP and VSO programs bring also increase local Afghans' confidence, which sets the conditions for development and grassroots community organizing, grievance resolution, and communal problem-solving. All of these activities complement the other elements of the comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy, which includes direct-action counterterrorism missions.

**Special Operations Enabling Capabilities**

**The Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command has described the “non-availability” of force enablers as the “most vexing issue in the operational environment” for special operations forces. In many instances, special operations forces rely on general purpose forces to provide the enabling capabilities they need to be successful in their missions, including rotary wing airlift, medical evacuation, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.**

**What do you believe are the greatest shortages in enabling capabilities facing our forces in Afghanistan?**

Given the decentralized manner in which SOF are dispersed in austere, remote areas – especially those forces conducting Village Stability Operations (VSO) and training Afghan Local Police (ALP) – the greatest enabling shortage is air asset support, both rotary and fixed wing. Although substantial progress has been made with increasing the number of air assets in theater over the last two years, meeting the requirement for these assets will be critical as the number of VSO and ALP sites increase, since this will mean that more small units are fielded in rural areas. Related, these teams also have an increased requirement for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance platforms equipped with signals intelligence and full-motion video capabilities. The intelligence analysts, and associated systems, are also necessary to properly exploit the data collected. Additionally, units in rural areas often need dedicated Route Clearance Packages to support ground movement, to conduct ground combat operations, and to maintain freedom of movement.

**If confirmed, how would you ensure the requirements for enabling capabilities of special operations forces in Afghanistan are met as general purpose forces are drawn down?**

Based on lessons from the drawdown in Iraq, I expect requirements for special operations enablers to increase as the conventional force footprint is reduced in Afghanistan. Requirements will continue to evolve as we adapt to the new force posture, but my top priority will be to ensure full connectivity to our teams, especially when it comes to maintaining the “Golden Hour” for medical evacuation. Additionally, I will ensure that we have sufficient air assets, including Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance and close-air support platforms as well as Route Clearance Packages.

### **Interagency Collaboration**

**The collaboration between U.S. Special Operations Forces, general purpose forces, and other U.S. Government departments and agencies has played a significant role in the success of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in recent years. However, much of this collaboration has been ad hoc in nature.**

**What do you believe are the most important lessons learned from the collaborative interagency efforts in Afghanistan?**

One of the most important lessons learned over the past few years is the necessity of a whole-of-government approach to be successful in campaigns such as that in Afghanistan. After all, the complexity of these missions requires experts from many fields and backgrounds to conduct an effective comprehensive civil-military campaign. Keeping all the actors on the same page, and communicating closely at all levels, has perhaps been a central factor in achieving a unified approach to our campaign plan. In particular, the close collaboration between the State and Defense Departments – from action officers to senior leaders – supports a unity of effort that has enabled progress in Afghanistan.

**How do you believe these efforts can be improved?**

Although there has been substantial progress improving interagency and international coordination and collaboration, there is still room to improve in areas such as our collective understanding of roles and responsibilities and the manner in which they fit into the overall campaign plan. Essential to this is to maintain an open line of communication and frequent coordinated action between and among all the various actors – including the U.S. Embassy, NATO’s Senior Civilian Representative, the United Nations, and Non-Governmental Organizations – to increase efficiencies, reduce redundancies, to eliminate waste, and to seek areas where cooperation could lead to results greater than the sum of the whole.

### **Intelligence Support for Indirect Activities**

**Some observers contend that the national intelligence agencies focus their assistance to the Defense Department in Afghanistan on special operators engaged in direct action operations. As a consequence, it is alleged, general purpose forces and special operations forces engaged in indirect activities, including foreign internal defense and population protection, receive less intelligence support.**

**Do you believe this is true?**

I believe this is a misperception since the national intelligence agencies are integrated into command processes throughout USFOR-A and ISAF. For example, Cryptologic Support Teams from the National Security Agency are spread across the theater down to the brigade level. Several hundred all-source analysts and specialty units from the Defense Intelligence Agency are located at every Regional Command (even the non-U.S. commands) and in conventional units executing Village Stability Operations (VSO). There are also over 100 geospatial analysts and specialists from the National Geospatial Agency support units throughout Afghanistan. In every case, these professionals bring expertise and reach-back capabilities for all types of forces and have been an integral part of enabling the intelligence fusion that has contributed to our success.

With regard the belief that some Special Operation Forces (SOF) are less supported than direct action SOF, this perception may arise from the operational reality of SOF elements that are supporting foreign internal defense, VSO, and the Afghan Local Police. While most SOF forces engaged in direct action operate from fixed bases – with extensive communications, robust staff, and assigned national agency analysts – SOF elements engaged in indirect activities are normally deployed in small teams to remote locations. These teams do not have large staffs and the support they do receive from headquarters elements is less direct, and, therefore, less obvious to many observers.

**If so, and if confirmed, how would you ensure special operations forces engaged in indirect activities receive adequate intelligence support?**

If confirmed, I will seek to maintain the strong relationship between COMISAF and intelligence organizations’ leadership to ensure intelligence products are available to all of our forces and are

concentrated to support the main effort. I will also continue to partner with National Intelligence Agencies to ensure our requirements are focused and clearly understood. And, finally, I will continue requesting the intelligence community's assistance in producing "tear-line" products to allow near-real-time and broad dissemination to all members and units of ISAF, as well as our Afghan partners.

### **Contract Oversight and Private Security Contractors**

**The United States has implemented a number of efforts to reduce the risk that U.S. contracting practices will be subject to corruption, which helps fuel the insurgency and undermines the legitimacy of the Afghan Government. These efforts include the establishment of the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force –Shafafiyat (Transparency) to coordinate ISAF anti-corruption activities.**

**What is your assessment of ISAF's anti-corruption efforts and understanding of criminal patronage networks, and what additional steps, if any, do you believe should be taken to improve those efforts and to ensure adequate oversight of ISAF and U.S. contracts is in place?**

ISAF and its partners in the Afghan government and key embassies have together developed a common understanding of the problem of corruption and its effect on the ISAF mission and the viability of the Afghan state. The most dangerous forms of corruption involve criminal patronage networks, which divert development and security force assistance, subvert state institutions, obstruct justice, and engage in and protect illicit activities that strengthen the insurgency and undermine the effectiveness and legitimacy of the government.

The establishment of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force Shafafiyat (Transparency) has led to a better understanding of these problems as well as important initiatives to address them. As a result of Shafafiyat's work, ISAF developed and implemented Counterinsurgency Contracting Guidance, which has helped ISAF and the international community be better buyers, and buy from legitimate suppliers. As a result of improved vendor-vetting efforts and integration of procurement and contracting into intelligence and operations at all levels, 75 U.S., international, and Afghan individuals or companies have been debarred from receiving contracts, 24 individuals and companies have been suspended, and 27 debarment actions are pending. Additionally, ISAF has supported the training of specialized Afghan anti-corruption units to develop sustainable Afghan capacity to address corruption.

Given the complexity of this problem, more work can be done. In particular, based on what I know, there is still a need to develop comprehensive U.S. and coalition vendor-vetting and contract oversight procedures. ISAF is currently consolidating over two dozen contracting databases; USFOR-A and the CENTCOM Contracting Command are coordinating to implement a new, more rigorous vendor-vetting process; and ISAF has submitted a proposal to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for the establishment of the Acquisition Accountability Office -

Afghanistan, which would provide oversight for all U.S. contracts in the country. If confirmed, I will examine these efforts to determine if they are on track and if anything else needs to be done.

**President Karzai has issued a decree calling for the disbandment of most private security contractors. Following that decree, the international community negotiated a temporary arrangement to allow for the continued use of PSCs for one year while the capacity of a Ministry of Interior guard force, called the Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), is developed.**

**What is your assessment of the potential for the APPF to replace or supplement PSCs in providing security?**

The APPF currently provides approximately 6,000 guards for various clients throughout Afghanistan, with plans to expand significantly to replace PSCs. I support the Afghan government's decision to eliminate PSCs and, if confirmed, intend to support the further development of the APPF. The most significant challenge is the short timeframe in which the APPF needs to increase in size and capability so that it can accomplish its mission. Efforts are underway to this end, including newly expanded APPF headquarters and the construction of a training center for guards. In short, the potential exists for the APPF to replace PSCs on time, although it will require significant work over the next year. Currently, joint ISAF-Afghan assessments of the APPF – which is part of the bridging strategy – are scheduled for September 2011, December 2011, and March 2012.

**If confirmed, what steps, if any, would you recommend to improve the development and oversight of the APPF?**

If confirmed, I will look closely at APPF to determine what steps might be necessary to improve development and oversight. Based on what I know, I believe that we should focus on two parallel lines of effort. First, we should support the development of command, control, and management functions within the existing APPF, which is similar to developing any police or military headquarters to perform a specific security missions. Second, we should support the development of a state-owned enterprise, which will support the APPF as it strives to provide security services in a manner similar to those of commercial security companies.

### **Reintegration and Reconciliation**

**The Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Program (APRP) has been established to enable former insurgent fighters to renounce violence and reintegrate peacefully into their communities. As of mid-June more than 1,700 former fighters had enrolled in the APRP, and the Afghan Government reported that it was in negotiations with more than 40 additional groups representing up to 2,000 more fighters. The APRP has been criticized, however, as involving only a small fraction of the Taliban insurgents.**



**What is your assessment of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program and the program's potential for reintegrating further numbers of low- to mid-level insurgent fighters?**

The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) is an essential component of our comprehensive, civil-military counterinsurgency campaign, one that convinces insurgents to join the peace process, accept the Afghan constitution, renounce violence, and rejoin Afghan society. It is a viable alternative to continued fighting or detention. Since the APRP began in August 2010, over 1,850 former insurgents have officially reintegrated – double the number from a few months ago – and at least another 2,000 are in some stage in the reintegration process. All 34 provinces now have Provincial Peace Committees, and a number of provinces have fully-functioning Provincial Reintegration Accounts, which give the Provincial Peace Committee resources to disburse in support of reintegration at the local level.

The greatest factor affecting reintegration, however, is not the number of functioning committees or the presence of reintegration accounts (though those are essential for the program's successful operation). Rather, it is the insurgency's declining resources, low morale, and poor leadership – all of which convince insurgents to abandon the fight and rejoin Afghan society. We are seeing some signs that these factors are encouraging informal reintegration (where insurgents do not enter the reintegration process, but simply return to their homes). As we continue to pressure insurgents on all fronts, we anticipate that we will see increased numbers of formal reintegrees as well. But where we can, we will encourage informal reintegrees to join the peace process by joining formal reintegration.

**It has been reported that coalition officials and Taliban representatives have engaged in preliminary talks on reconciliation.**

**Do you support the beginning of reconciliation talks with the Taliban at this time?**

Historically, ending an insurgency requires some sort of political settlement. At the same time, I recognize that any solution to the fighting in Afghanistan must be led by the Afghan government if it is to be effective and enduring. For that reason, I fully support Afghan-led reconciliation efforts and support the overall concept as it has been articulated by the Secretary of State.

**Ammonium Nitrate for Improvised Explosive Devices from Pakistan**

**Ammonium nitrate (AN), a prime component in improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that have killed or wounded thousands of U.S., coalition, and Afghan troops and Afghan civilians, continues to flow into Afghanistan. The vast majority of this AN flows in from fertilizer factories in Pakistan. In 2010, in an effort to stem the flow of this material, the Afghan government banned the use of AN as a fertilizer. Despite this effort and vigilance by Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), IED incidents and casualties have continued. The amounts of AN reportedly ferried into Afghanistan from Pakistan are staggering.**

**In light of your recent position at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), what is your understanding of the situation regarding the flow of AN into Afghanistan?**

We assess that a large amount of the AN used in IEDs in Afghanistan originates in Pakistan, where it is manufactured as a fertilizer called calcium ammonium nitrate (CAN). There are no regulatory controls to adequately control the sale and distribution of CAN in Pakistan, which, combined with the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, allows insurgents to procure and move large amounts of CAN into Afghanistan. Although Afghan and ISAF forces have made considerable progress in interdicting shipments of CAN in Afghanistan and along the border since President Karzai banned it in early 2010, it will take a concerted, international effort with the Pakistani government and Pakistani industry in order to better regulate, track, and interdict CAN. The Pakistanis took a significant step forward recently with their release of national counter-IED strategy and the issue is being addressed with the Pakistani government on multiple levels within the U.S. government.

**If confirmed as Commander, NATO ISAF/Commander, USFOR-A, what tools would you have at your disposal to address the flow of AN into Afghanistan and are there any additional tools that you would seek to have?**

There are a variety of current tools at our disposal, and, if confirmed, I would closely examine what other resources, technologies, and initiatives could be brought to bear to reduce the flow of AN into Afghanistan. Currently, there are several border initiatives to address AN, and AN interdiction has increased significantly over the last year, aided by forces on the border and increased intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets. However, due to the porous nature of the border, there also need to be efforts to address the flow of AN at its source: the factories in Pakistan that produce AN. This would require diplomatic resources – including continuing to work closely with the US Embassy in Islamabad – to facilitate an agreement between the governments of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and perhaps the U.S. to either transition to a fertilizer that cannot be used for IEDs or, possibly, to dye the AN to identify which factories are producing AN used in IEDs. If confirmed, I would engage senior Pakistani military officials on this issue and would also work closely with interagency and international partners to reduce the flow of AN and other IED components.

### **Afghan Opium Trade**

**According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime 2010 Annual Report - released in June 2010, drugs from Afghanistan have an annual market value of \$65 billion, cater to 15 million drug users, cause 100,000 deaths each year, are contributing to the spread of HIV at an unprecedented rate, and are a source of funds for criminal groups, insurgents and terrorists. Moreover, since 2006, much more opium has been produced in Afghanistan than is consumed worldwide, and the resulting stockpile is now large enough to meet two years' worth of world heroin demand.**

**As it relates to the drug trade in Afghanistan, what is your understanding of the role of the Commander of ISAF and Commander of USFOR-A respectively?**

The Commander of ISAF operates under NATO mandate, which precludes forces under ISAF command from conducting operations specifically directed against narcotics organizations. However, NATO forces can conduct nexus operations, which are operations against narco-groups with direct linkages to the insurgency.

The Commander of USFOR-A operates under direction of U.S. policy. Selected U.S. units and organizations that are under the command of USFOR-A, such as Combined Joint Task Force-Nexus, can conduct operations that target the drug trade specifically.

**What is your understanding of the rules of engagement for U.S. forces as it relates to drug labs and the drug network respectively?**

ISAF's mandate prevents the Alliance from participating in operations that are exclusively focused on counter-narcotics, although NATO forces can conduct nexus operations against narco-groups with direct linkages to the insurgency. U.S. forces under the ISAF command structure can participate in counternarcotics operations only when there is a connection between narcotics and the insurgency. Of course, it should also be noted that our forces always retain the right to defend themselves when they are facing an imminent threat.

**What is your understanding of the nexus - if any- between the drug trade and the various insurgent groups in Afghanistan?**

The illegal narcotics industry is intrinsically linked to the insurgency, corrupt actors, and criminal patronage networks. There is no clear line separating any of these groups since their operations and support networks overlap and are intertwined at a fundamental level.

**How significant a source of funding is the drug trade for insurgent groups in Afghanistan?**

While estimates vary, a significant percentage of the illegal drug trade funds the insurgency, and we assess that the illegal drug trade is the largest internal source of funding for the Afghan Taliban.

**What is your understanding of the role of the Drug Enforcement Agency and comparable NATO law enforcement efforts in Afghanistan?**

The Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Borders Patrol, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the U.S. Marshalls, the Serious Organized Crime Agency (UK), and other organizations all work closely with the Afghan government and the international community to improve and reform the Afghan criminal justice system and to strengthen Afghan law-enforcement capacity. All of these groups bring unique skill sets required to address challenges posed by the drug trade and to help the Afghan government develop long-term solutions.

**As Commander of ISAF and Commander of USFOR-A, respectively, what would be your relationship to these law enforcement activities?**

To ensure unity of effort, ISAF/USFOR-A will continue to synchronize its efforts with civilian law enforcement partners in the areas of capacity-building, public awareness, disrupting illicit precursor chemicals, and combating nexus organizations. As with other efforts, the key to this is close communication and coordination so that we are all working toward the same goal and focused on our campaign plan.

### **Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan**

**In each of the past three fiscal years, DOD has expended approximately \$450 million building the capacity of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan.**

**What is your current assessment of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan?**

The Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) have dramatically improved over time. In Helmand Province, which accounts for approximately 40 percent of the world's illicit opium production, the CNPA have provided expertise to help investigate narcotics trafficking in support of the Provincial Governor's counter-narcotics campaign (contributing to a 94 percent conviction rate in 2010). And in May 2011 alone, the CNPA helped seize 12,000kg of narcotics around the country.

Despite this progress, more work remains to be done. For example, the CNPA lacks sufficient manpower to effectively enforce counter-narcotics laws across the entire nation. It also needs to improve institutional capabilities such as strategic planning, budget formation, and logistics to reduce its reliance on other agencies, such as the Ministries of Interior and Defense.

**As the Commander, NATO ISAF/Commander, USFOR-A, what would be your relationship to the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan?**

Currently, NTM-A/CSTC-A has a mentoring relationship with the CNPA to support its development. As Commander ISAF/USFOR-A, if confirmed, I would oversee this mentoring relationship.

**Are you satisfied with the arrangement?**

Yes.

## **Counter Threat Finance Activities in Afghanistan**

**In 2008, the United States created the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) to disrupt the flow of funding from the Afghan opium trade and other illicit sources to the Taliban, al Qaeda, and other terrorist and insurgent groups in Afghanistan. The ATFC and related organizations have helped Afghan authorities investigate and prosecute individuals connected to the opium trade, identify outside sympathizers who have been supplying funding to those individuals, and police a variety of corrupt schemes that have filled the coffers of the Taliban-led insurgency and other illicit actors. The ATFC has also helped U.S. forces identify and target individuals associated with improvised explosive devices networks operating in Afghanistan.**

### **What is your assessment of the operations of the ATFC?**

The ATFC is a unique interagency, civilian-military organization that provides a variety of products, services, and support for military units and civilian agencies. These include target packages that support Joint Prioritization Effects List (JPEL) nominations for military commands; Drug Kingpin and Terrorist Designations; district-by-district assessments of insurgent finances used by military planners to identify targets; threat finance risk assessments for U.S. development projects and contracting; and training and mentoring of specialized Afghan investigative organizations. The ATFC provides support to a large number of United States agencies, coalition partners, and the Afghan government. Given the imperative to staunch the illicit financial activities that fuel the insurgency, as well as the criminal patronage networks that undermine the government, the work of the ATFC plays a vital role supporting many elements of our overall strategy.

**Some have argued that tracking and targeting the financial sources of insurgent networks is a waste of scarce intelligence resources.**

### **What is your view of counter threat finance activities, particularly as it relates to Afghanistan?**

Given the nexus of the insurgency, illegal narcotics networks, and criminal organizations, counter-threat finance activities are vital to our overall effort to degrade the insurgency while simultaneously supporting the development of an effective Afghan government. As noted above, counter threat finance activities involve more than just the tracking of financial sources, and, in fact, lead to intelligence and knowledge that is directly actionable. Additionally, these activities inform military planners as they are developing operational plans and allocating resources. Overall, counter threat finance activities contribute significantly to multiple elements of the broader campaign.

## **General Purpose Forces used for Security Force Assistance**

**Building the security forces of foreign nations has traditionally been a special operations forces mission. However, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, general purpose forces have been performing this mission for some time.**

**What is your understanding and assessment of the preparation and performance of Army and Marine Corps general purpose forces operating in Afghanistan in a security force assistance role?**

The Armed Forces of the United States have now been involved in counterinsurgency missions for nearly a decade, during which time they have had extensive experience with security force assistance. We have learned numerous lessons during this time, incorporated them into our training and education systems, and used past experience to prepare soldiers, Marines, and others for the complex nature of these conflicts, to include security force assistance. Having seen our forces in action, my assessment is that they have performed very well in this role and have, in fact, surpassed all expectations.

**How do you envision the use of general purpose forces in the security force assistance role, if at all, as U.S. forces begin to drawdown between 2011 and 2014?**

General purpose forces will continue to be used in a security force assistance role, helping to develop the ANSF as Afghans increasingly take the lead for security throughout Afghanistan.

## **Support the Mission with Operational Energy**

**On June 7, 2011, General Petraeus signed and issued a memorandum for U.S. Forces-Afghanistan providing command guidance on supporting the mission with operational energy. In the memorandum General Petraeus stated his expectation that commanders will take ownership of unit fuel demand and announced the standing up of an office to improve operational energy capabilities by changing how Coalition forces use energy. The memorandum also called on commanders to make energy-informed, risk-based decisions on aviation and vehicle operations, base camp design, power and water generation and distribution. General Petraeus also called for energy considerations to be included in requirements and oversight of contracts.**

**Do you concur with General Petraeus' command guidance and his efforts to date?**

Yes, since our forces are more dependent on energy than ever before, this guidance recognizes the importance of managing that risk by reducing our energy consumption. Moreover, reducing our environmental footprint is also important our efforts to be good, environmentally-conscious guests of the Afghan people.

**If confirmed, to what extent will you continue to support the mission of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan with operational energy or issue similar command guidance?**

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize this issue and will issue similar guidance.

### **Women in Combat**

**What restrictions, if any, do you believe should be imposed with respect to the assignment of combat-related duties to women in uniform, or the assignment of women to combat units?**

If confirmed, I will adhere to the current policies in place regarding combat-related duties for women in uniform. That said, I understand that, at the direction of Congress, the Department is in the process of reviewing current policies. If they change, I will ensure that all forces under my command follow the new rules and guidelines and I will work with all the relevant parties to make sure potential changes are instituted with as little disruption as possible. Obviously, women in uniform make tremendous contributions every day on the battlefield, and, due to the nature of the conflict in Afghanistan, many women have been engaged in combat and have performed courageously. Some have been wounded, and indeed, some have been killed. I honor their sacrifice.

### **Health of 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 in theater to deal with this increased stress. Increased suicide rates are clear reminders that service members, particularly those who have been deployed multiple times, are under tremendous stress and need access to mental health care.**

**What is your assessment of the adequacy of health care and mental health capabilities supporting service members in Afghanistan?**

With over 9,000 health-care personnel in Afghanistan, representing most medical specialties, I believe that our forces have access to excellent health-care facilities and professionals. This is particularly true with our emergency health-care capabilities. Rates of U.S. forces killed in action and those dying from wounds have declined since 2009, despite an increase in number of personnel at risk. More troops are surviving devastating wounds as a result of increased medical aviation platforms, more field hospitals, and efforts like our “flying intensive care unit,” in which wounded forces are transported to Landstuhl, Germany, often within hours of injury.

Based on what I know, I likewise assess our mental-health capabilities as robust. There has been a significant increase in the number of behavioral health-care personnel in theater in the last two years, as well as in the number of restoration and reconditioning centers for those with

behavioral and mental-health problems. A new mental health telemedicine network has also been established, allowing direct communication with mental health-teams by troops based even in remote regions. Currently, there are 34 active telemedicine portals in operation, with an additional 42 planned. Also of note, the first theater-wide behavioral health and neurology care conference took place this month, which allowed mental-health experts to discuss best practices and lessons learned. Additionally, all efforts in theater have been bolstered by the Defense Department's focus on this area, and significant improvements in pre- and post-deployment assessments and support. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that our forces have access to the mental health care that they need.

**What is your assessment of suicide prevention programs and resources available to support these programs in Afghanistan?**

Suicide is obviously a huge concern for all commanders, and the military has made significant strides to address worrisome trends. In late 2009, The Suicide Prevention Task Force reviewed more than 300 programs, culminating in a report of best practices that have been incorporated throughout the force. And, in addition to multiple direct care programs, the Army is managing 13 suicide prevention research projects.

The military suicide prevention program currently spans the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases, with each Service having tailored programs for their members. All members are exposed to specific prevention and resiliency training, much of this through the Religious Support Teams in theater and through programs such as "Ask, Care, Escort" and "Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training." More than 32,000 additional Service members have received the suicide awareness training so far this year, and over 900 have been trained to act as "gatekeepers."

Overall, I assess that we are actively addressing this problem with adequate resources. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a priority within the command.

**What is your assessment of the implementation of the Department of Defense policy on management of mild traumatic brain injury throughout Afghanistan?**

This is obviously another area of concern since these types of injuries have been so prevalent in these conflicts. Under current guidance, medics and forward physicians in theater use straightforward flow charts on laminated cards to determine who needs to rest and who needs to be referred to higher levels of care. This process appears to be working, with neurologists at the centers for higher levels of care indicating that the patients they see have been appropriately dealt with according to the clinical guidelines. As a result, these forward centers have achieved a 95-99 percent return-to-duty rate without the need for advanced intervention. The 1-5 percent that do not recover using these guidelines are referred to the two major concussion/traumatic brain injury specialty care centers, where specialists are able to diagnose and treat more advanced injuries. Overall, I assess that Defense Department policy is being followed in Afghanistan, with good effect.



### **What is your assessment of medical evacuation capabilities in theater today?**

I assess that medical evacuation capabilities in theater today are excellent, with the overall system performance continuing to improve. In 2009, the average time for urgent missions was 62 minutes; in 2010 it was 47 minutes; and, so far this year, it is 42 minutes. There are currently sufficient aircraft and crews in theater to continue to outperform the 60 minute “golden hour” standard through 2011.

### **If confirmed, what standard would you establish for capability and availability of medical evacuation assets, including for forward operating units?**

It is absolutely essential that we sustain the same high standard of medical evacuation performance and reliability to ensure that our forces have the support they need, especially in the critical summer fighting season. We have sufficient medical evacuation assets in theater to allow 24/7 coverage of the main battle space and the ability to forward position medical evacuation assets for deliberate operations outside the normal coverage rings. If confirmed, I will maintain these standards and continue to look for ways to improve this vital mission.

### **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

**The Department has in recent years developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including providing appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault. However, incidents of sexual misconduct involving military personnel in Afghanistan are still being reported. Victims and their advocates claim that they are victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate treatment for the victim. They assert that their command fails to respond appropriately with basic medical services and with an adequate investigation of their charges followed by a failure to hold assailants accountable.**

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

Yes, I believe that the current sexual assault policies and procedures are effective. The Department of Defense believes its first priority is for victims to be protected, treated with dignity and respect, and to receive the medical treatment, care, and counseling that they deserve.

A restricted reporting option is available for victims who wish to confidentially disclose incidents so that they can receive medical treatment and counseling without triggering the official investigative process. Service members who are sexually assaulted and desire restricted reporting under this policy must report the assault to a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), a Victim Advocate, a health-care provider, or a chaplain. Health-care providers will initiate the appropriate care and treatment, and report the sexual assault to the SARC in lieu of reporting the assault to law enforcement or the command. The goal of the restricted-reporting option is to encourage victims to come forward and receive help.

**What problems, if any, are you aware of in the manner in which restricted reporting procedure has been put into operation?**

Although I do not know the exact details, I understand that there was an issue when victims were flown via medical evacuation to other medical facilities where their identity and situation were unintentionally made known. This issue has been corrected, with the reason for a medical evacuation now listed as “internal wounds” versus “sexual assault trauma.” This change protects ensures the sexual-assault case remains restrictive.

**What is your view of the steps taken to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in Afghanistan, including assaults against contractor personnel?**

There are robust policies and procedures in place to prevent and to respond to sexual assaults. Our medical personnel, military police, and SARC support all personnel, including contractors.

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

We currently have adequate training, resources, and investigators to respond to sexual assaults. One area of concern, however, is that some medical providers are not trained and/or certified before arriving in theater to conduct sexual-assault forensic examinations. This weakness was identified during a recent sexual assault assessment, and, as a result, medical providers will be required to receive adequate training and/or certification prior to deployment.

**What is your view of the willingness and ability of military leaders to hold assailants accountable for their acts?**

I expect everyone under my command to hold assailants accountable, and, if confirmed, I will explicitly tell subordinates at all levels that sexual assault prevention is a command issue and I expect and require their personal commander’s attention.

**If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure senior level direction and oversight of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in Afghanistan?**

Sexual assault prevention is a command issue, and if confirmed, I will tell my senior leaders that this is a priority for me and that I expect them to respond to incidents in a timely manner with appropriate medical services, to conduct thorough investigations, and to hold assailants accountable. My program managers will be tasked to provide the proper education and training on sexual assault prevention and reporting procedures to all personnel.

## **Standards for 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?**

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Leadership starts at the top, and, if confirmed, I will personally ensure that the troops under my command understand my expectations and the clear standards under which we operate. I will provide clear guidance at every level of command, proper training, and ensure prompt and effective action is taken if there is a situation where we fail to meet our own high standards. Additionally, if confirmed, I will ensure that we continue to undertake thorough inspections of all detention facilities and related programs throughout Afghanistan and also that we continue to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Our country must always live our values, and nowhere is that more true than how we treat detainees.

## **Detention Operations in Afghanistan**

**In the past several years, significant changes have been made in the way detention operations have been conducted in a counterinsurgency environment. In Afghanistan, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 is responsible for overseeing detention operations, with the goal of responsibly transitioning detention operations to the Government of Afghanistan.**

**In your view, what are the main lessons learned over the last several years regarding the conduct of detention operations within a counterinsurgency environment?**

Detention operations are an integral part of any counterinsurgency campaign, and our experiences over the past few years have taught us many valuable lessons. Perhaps chief among them is that detention operations have to be conducted in the most humane manner possible, since our treatment of detainees directly reflects our values as a nation and, as a result, can have strategic effects. We have also learned that we have to conduct counterinsurgency “inside the wire,” since detained individuals have the potential not only to be sources of intelligence, but also to be part of the solution if they can be effectively reintegrated into society. At the Detention Facility in Parwan, for example, we have initiated various programs to teach detainees job skills that range from agriculture to tailoring. Additionally, we have established a robust Detainee Review Board process and are conducting “release shuras” in which communities come together to support individuals we believe can safely be released. Another lesson learned in recent years is that all of our detention operations have to be conducted with the understanding that they will eventually be transitioned to the host nation; capacity-building must always be a primary focus.

**What is your assessment of the progress of efforts to build the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to assume responsibility for detention operations?**

The U.S. Detention Facility in Parwan – our flagship detention facility in Afghanistan – began transitioning detention operations in January with Afghans assuming responsibility at some of the Detention Housing Units. The Afghan government clearly intends to assume more responsibility for detention operations over time, and we will continue to support efforts to build additional Afghan capacity to take on this mission. There are two areas in particular that still need additional work as the transition continues. First, we have to continue our efforts to support the Afghan government as it establishes a more capable judicial system, which will require recruiting and training more judges and prosecutors, among other officials. (These efforts will be bolstered by the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission-Afghanistan, which was approved by the North Atlantic Council and endorsed by ISAF Defense Ministers this month; this organization will be established as a dual-hat command with the U.S. Rule of Law Field Force-Afghanistan.) Additionally, the Afghan government needs to establish a legal framework for effectively dealing with insurgents. If confirmed, I will work closely with the interagency Rule of Law task force to closely examine our efforts to build the necessary Afghan capacity so that Afghans can assume more responsibility for detention operations.

**Afghanistan-Pakistan Cooperation**

**What is your assessment of the current level of cooperation between Afghan and Pakistani forces in confronting the threat of militant extremists in the border region?**

While the relationship between Afghan and Pakistani forces along the border has had its ups and downs, the level of cooperation in the border region has improved significantly over the last two years, especially at the operational level. For example, four Border Coordination Centers have been established; these centers are manned by Afghan, Pakistani, and ISAF liaisons and facilitate the timely exchange of information as well as operational coordination. Additionally, there have

been several coordinated “hammer and anvil” operations along the border in RC(E) between Afghanistan’s Kunar Province and Pakistan’s Mohmand Agency – in which forces on both sides of the border work together to ensure that insurgents do not use the border areas as an escape route.

Despite this operational progress, there is significant room for improvement. There are still periodic incidents of “friendly fire,” and insurgent cross-border movement has increased in recent months (due in part to the warmer weather). Despite these recent incidents – and increased tensions in the wake of the bin Laden raid – Afghan, Pakistani, and ISAF forces along the border have continued to use the Border Coordination Centers to exchange information.

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

If confirmed, I would seek to increase opportunities for military-to-military and civilian-to-civilian dialogue on security matters. I believe this dialogue is critical so that we can best coordinate our activities with each other and pursue new initiatives. I would also build at the operational and tactical level on the collaboration in RC(E) by expanding existing Border Coordination Center cooperation and by looking to expand coordinated cross-border operations, including along the border in RC(S).

### **Congressional Oversight**

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

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.