

Advance Policy Questions for the Honorable Ashton Carter
Nominee to be Secretary of Defense

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

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

No.

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

I do not see a need for modification of any Goldwater-Nichols Act or special operations provisions at this time. The success of our Armed Forces since the enactment of these provisions amply demonstrates that they have served the Department and our nation well.

Duties of the Secretary of Defense

Section 113 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Secretary of Defense is the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense. Subject to the direction of the President, the Secretary of Defense, under section 113, has authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (DOD).

3. Do you believe there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Secretary of Defense?

No.

4. What changes to section 113, if any, would you recommend?

At this time, I believe that the authorities in section 113 for the position of Secretary of Defense are appropriate.

Qualifications

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

I have spent more than three decades working on defense and national security issues, both in and out of government. Most recently I served in two senior positions in the Department, including as the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. As Deputy Secretary of Defense I served as the Department's Chief Operating Officer with management over the Department's budget and civilian military personnel. During my tenure as Undersecretary for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, I had responsibility for the department's efforts to accelerate the production of urgent operational need such as MRAPs which saved countless lives in Afghanistan, increase the taxpayer's buying power, and strengthen the nation's defense against emerging threats.

Previously, in the 1990's, I served as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy where I was responsible for a variety of strategic issues. Between my periods of government service I have served in a variety of academic and government advisory roles focused on national security and defense issues.

Priorities

If confirmed, you will confront a range of critical issues relating to threats to national security and ensuring that the Armed Forces are prepared to deal with these threats.

6. In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Secretary of Defense?

The challenges include preserving and enhancing the finest fighting force in the world and taking care of their families; providing a strategic perspective to the threats and opportunities in the world; and implementing significant reforms that are crucial in a time of budget uncertainty.

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

If confirmed, I look forward to addressing these challenges by consulting with the civilian and military leadership of the Department, seeking the perspective of our partners, allies and friends, working closely with my interagency partners, seeking the best ideas from outside the government, and working closely with this Committee and the Congress.

8. If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish in terms of issues which must be addressed by the Secretary of Defense?

The top priorities are to ensure the security of the American people, defend our vital interests, and fight and win our nation's wars.

Chain of Command

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Section 163(a) of title 10 further provides that the President may direct communications to combatant commanders be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and may assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.

9. Do you believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command?

My understanding of these laws and my experience leads me to believe that they establish a clear and effective chain of command, which is an essential element to successful military operations.

10. In your view, do these provisions enhance or degrade civilian control of the military?

In my view, these provisions significantly enhance civilian control of the military and place the President and the Secretary of Defense in position to best exercise civilian control of the military by occupying the top positions in the military chain of command.

11. Are there circumstances in which you believe it is appropriate for U.S. military forces to be under the operational command or control of an authority outside the chain of command established under title 10, United States Code?

I believe that US military forces normally should operate under the chain of command established under title 10. However, today's threats are such that there may be circumstances involving certain sensitive operations where an exception to that chain of command may be appropriate to provide military support to the head of a non-DoD U.S. department or agency. It is my understanding that only the President may approve such an exception, as also provided in section 162 of title 10. If confirmed, I will consider these situations very carefully and provide the President with my best advice regarding where an exception to the established chain of command may be appropriate.

Advice of the Service Chiefs and the Combatant Commanders

Section 151 of title 10, United States Code, provides, in part, that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense and that if any member of the Joint Chiefs submits to the Chairman advice or an opinion, in disagreement with, or advice or an opinion in addition to, the advice presented by the Chairman, the Chairman shall present that advice or opinion at the same time he provides his own advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Section 163 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the spokesman for the combatant commanders, especially on the operational requirements of their commands.

12. What is your understanding and assessment of the distribution of responsibilities and authorities for providing uniformed professional military judgment, advice, and opinions to the President, National Security Council, and civilian leadership of the Department?

Based on my understanding of the law and my experience, I believe the distribution of responsibilities and authorities for providing professional military judgment, advice and opinions is adequate and functioning well.

13. What changes in law, if any, do you think may be necessary to ensure that the views of the Service Chiefs and of the combatant commanders are presented and considered?

Based on my understanding of the law, and my experience, I do not recommend any changes to the law.

Use of Military Force

The question as to whether and when U.S. forces should participate in potentially dangerous situations is one of the most important and difficult decisions that the national command authorities have to make. Prior Secretaries of Defense and Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have proposed criteria to guide decision-making for such situations.

14. In your view, what factors should be considered in making recommendations to the President on the use of military force?

The factors that should be considered are: the necessity of removing a critical threat to the U.S. homeland and citizens and its allies and friends; the prospects and strategy for achieving lasting success through the use of force; complementary employment, as appropriate, of other instruments of national power; and the assistance as appropriate of allies and partners.

National Security Budget Reductions

The 2011 Budget Control Act established discretionary budget caps to realize nearly a trillion dollars in budget savings spending over ten years. Half of those budget cuts are to national defense discretionary accounts.

15. Do you believe that defense spending reductions of this magnitude can be accomplished without significant adverse impact on our national security?

No. During my tenure as Deputy Secretary and Acquisition Executive the Department developed a comprehensive strategy. I said then, and I will reiterate now, that the strategy is not executable under the sequestration-level budget caps of the Budget Control Act.

16. How would you assess the national military strategy to deal with the changed budget environment?

Any strategy must continue to protect and advance this nation's interests, within the resources the nation is willing to commit to national defense. If confirmed, I will seek a balance between maintaining an agile and ready force to address today's demands while investing in the capabilities we need to address future challenges.

17. If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of DOD funding?

The measure must be, can the Department meet the security challenges of today, while also investing adequate resources to prepare for future security challenges, both the expected and the unexpected.

18. If confirmed, and given this era of budget austerity, how will you prioritize the objectives of meeting ongoing operational commitments around the world, re-setting of the force, and investing in the future force?

There has to be a balance. The Department should have sufficient capacity to deal with the wide range of challenges we face, yet not maintain more capacity than we can afford to modernize and keep ready, given that we also have a responsibility to the force of the future.

Readiness of the Armed Forces

19. What is your understanding and assessment of the current readiness of the Armed Forces?

I believe that readiness has been especially affected by sudden and uncertain budget reductions. Readiness is essential to our security and to ensure troops sent in to conflict are fully prepared. The service chiefs testified last week before this Committee that there have

been some readiness gains over the last year, but that there are still critical readiness deficits in many areas. Any readiness gains over the last year appear to me to be extremely fragile and will certainly reverse without sufficient resources.

20. What is your understanding and assessment of the Department's readiness reporting and monitoring systems, such as the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS)? In your view, does DRRS provide civilian and military leaders with the information necessary to make informed resource and operational decisions?

The readiness systems in place provide senior leaders with the information they need to determine which forces are ready to deploy considering a variety of mission criteria. These systems contain current and historical readiness data from the tactical to the strategic level. In my view, the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) does provide the necessary information to make informed resource and operational decisions.

21. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose making to the Department's readiness systems to ensure timely and accurate information is available for decisions on commitment of military forces and to judge the impact of budget conditions on the readiness of the Armed Forces?

The Department's readiness reporting systems, the Defense Readiness Reporting System (DRRS) in particular, contain a variety of readiness resourcing and capability data that is useful for senior leaders to gain an understanding of our operational vulnerabilities and shortcomings.

22. If confirmed, to what key indications and indicators of a "hollow" or unready military will you pay closest attention? What are the most dangerous risks or consequences associated with a "hollow" or unready force in your opinion?

Key elements of readiness include the quality of our military personnel and the status of their individual training in the military specialties, the manning and training of the units in which they serve to meet the mission essential tasks they are given, and the availability of their required equipment from basic small arms to major platforms. This individual and unit readiness must be assessed against the requirement of the contingency plans of the combatant commanders. I have always paid considerable attention to these elements and I will continue to do so if confirmed as this is an essential obligation of leaders to the forces we send in harm's way.

Audit Readiness

The Department of Defense remains unable to achieve a clean financial statement audit. The Department also remains on the Government Accountability Office's list of high risk agencies and management systems for financial management and weapon system acquisition. Although audit-readiness has been a goal of the Department for decades, DOD has repeatedly failed to meet numerous congressionally directed audit-readiness deadlines.

23. What is your understanding and assessment of the Department's efforts to achieve a clean financial statement audit?

My understanding of the Department's efforts is that the Department has made progress in the last five years following the strategic plan and priorities established early in this Administration. If confirmed, I will get a detailed assessment from my Chief Financial Officer, and hold him responsible and accountable for making auditability one of my top business reform priorities.

24. Do you believe that the Department is likely to meet the current 2017 statutory objective for ensuring that its financial statements are validated as ready for audit?

If confirmed, I will be in a better position to inform Congress on the 2017 objective after I have the results of the ongoing military departments' audits.

25. What is the likeliness that this audit will produce a clean opinion? In your view, how long is it likely to be from the time when the Department certifies its financial statements as "ready for audit" to the time when the Department achieves a clean audit opinion? If confirmed, what specific actions would you propose taking to promote compliance with the statutory objective?

Experience throughout the government, with agencies that are far smaller and less complex than the Department of Defense (DoD), demonstrates it takes several years to move from an initial audit to a clean opinion. So I do not think it is realistic to expect that a first year audit of the entire Department will produce a clean opinion. If confirmed, I will continue to make this a high priority and hold our senior leaders, civilian and military, accountable for positive progress towards a clean opinion.

26. What is your understanding of what the validation of audit readiness means? What steps will the Department go through to validate its financial statements as ready for audit and when will these steps be taken?

My understanding is that a validation of audit readiness is an independent assessment to ensure key elements required by a financial audit are in fact part of the day-to-day processes and internal controls and can be demonstrated to show they are compliant with accounting standards. If confirmed, I will develop a complete understanding of the department's

validation of audit readiness in order to hold the Chief Financial Officer responsible and accountable to monitor key critical path milestones so the Department is ready for audit in FY 2018.

27. What steps do you believe that Congress and/or the Department should take if the Department fails to meet the statutory objective, given that the current administration will not be in office in 2017?

If confirmed, I intend to do everything I can to position the Department to comply with the statutory guidance. The Chief Financial Officer should lay out a clear set of interim critical path milestones and ensuring those gates are met. If confirmed, I will ensure that this receives an appropriate priority and that accountability is instilled into the performance appraisals of senior leaders. I believe Congress should continue to provide constructive oversight to ensure full understanding of the Department's direction and progress and to help when applicable.

28. In your view, what evidence, if any, can we point to today that provides Congress and taxpayers confidence that the Department's resources are being spent appropriately given its inability to pass a financial statement audit?

The Department continues to meet the mission of defending our country's basic values with a world-class military. It trains and equips our men and women to carry out critical missions to protect us and our allies around the world. While the department currently falls short of having a clean audit of our financial statements, we do receive positive audit opinions on a significant amount of our resources, and there are numerous controls in place to ensure taxpayer resources are spent as intended by the Congress. Independent of auditability, the department has a detailed track of where the money goes and what it supports. If confirmed, I intend to demonstrate to the taxpayers that DoD is a good steward of our resources and worthy of their confidence.

Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Collaboration

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have in recent years increased collaboration to support service members as they transition to veteran status. This support includes access to health and mental health care, improved disability evaluation, and coordination of compensation and other benefits.

29. If confirmed, what would you do to ensure that the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs fully cooperate with each other to develop simplified processes to achieve seamless transition as service members move to veteran status?

We must be unwavering in our commitment to our veterans and their families. The Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continuously collaborate to better support transitioning Service members. This effort includes the Transition Assistance Program to ensure our Service members receive the skills and tools

necessary for a successful transition from Active Duty to civilian life. In addition, I am aware that the two Departments have improved information sharing, such as timely availability of Service Treatment Records to VA and enhanced sharing of health information, and are working toward greater interoperability of their records systems. If confirmed, I will continue to direct those responsible in DOD to work toward a seamless transition from recovery to reintegration or transition for our Service members, especially those who are wounded, ill or injured.

Integrated Disability Evaluation System

The Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) integrates the DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability systems to improve and expedite processing of service members through the disability evaluation system. Service members continue, however, to experience lengthy delays getting their disability ratings. Although DOD has shown progress in meeting IDES timeliness goals, IDES casework remains backlogged in the VA's portion of the system.

30. What is your assessment of the need to further streamline and improve the IDES?

DoD must continually evaluate its disability evaluation system to identify and implement process improvements. A key initiative underway is the development of a DoD Disability Evaluation System (DES) IT system to provide new capabilities to support end-to-end DES case management – tracking, reporting, and electronic case file transfer. We need to continue to work with VA to ensure our IT systems for evaluating and compensating disabled Service members and Veterans are interoperable.

31. If confirmed, how would you work with the VA Secretary to ensure both DOD and VA meet or exceed timeliness goals through each phase of the multi-step disability evaluation process?

If confirmed, I will continue to engage directly with the Secretary of the VA and at DOD with senior leaders in the Services. I will direct the DOD to collaborate with our VA partners to identify necessary changes and appropriately address them. If confirmed, I will ensure that the DOD maintains an effective joint and integrated disability program.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

32. What is your assessment of the Department's progress on implementing recent legislative changes intended to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in the military?

First, I want to make clear that I consider sexual assault absolutely and without exception unacceptable. It is reprehensible in any aspect of society but particularly consequential in the military, which must operate quickly with complete trust and delegates so much authority to

commanders and where missions often require long deployments in austere environments. I understand the Department is implementing many new provisions of law, mandating many changes in programs and procedures. I am told that implementation of the provisions in the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2014 is ongoing. I believe DoD needs to do better in its prevention efforts and in responding to the needs of survivors compassionately, quickly and effectively.

My understanding is the Department is also working on the implementation of the relevant Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon NDAA for FY 2015 sections, which were enacted in December 2014. If confirmed, I will personally continue to make this a top priority and continue the collaboration with Members of Congress, which is crucial in identifying issues and crafting solutions.

33. What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Services have in place to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?

If confirmed, I will take a personal role in assessing these issues and holding people accountable for outcomes. I am aware that training exists for all service members, at all levels, and it is tailored specifically to resonate within each service and rank's culture. I will continue to assess the effectiveness of this training, and ensure adjustments are made as necessary. It is my understanding that the investigators in recent years have largely changed from an incident-focused investigation to an offender-focused investigation, which emphasizes that an offender's behavioral history may extend beyond the confines of any one particular incident. I am also aware that the relevant agencies have developed training that helps investigators better understand the impact of trauma on memory. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to work to refine and improve training.

34. What is your view of the willingness and ability of the Services, and military commanders in particular, to hold assailants accountable for their acts?

A top priority of DoD must be to hold assailants appropriately accountable for their acts. This must be carried out by the Services and military commanders.

35. What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove from military commanders' disposition authority over violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including sexual assaults?

Leaders have offered thoughtful perspectives on both sides of this issue. As a matter of first principle, I believe that the Secretary of Defense and other leaders need to be able to hold everyone in an organization accountable. I understand the Department is concerned that this change could tell commanders that it is not their job to root out the evil of sexual assault. I further understand that a congressionally-mandated independent panel found no evidence that removing commanders from the process would improve accountability of offenders or reporting by victims. If confirmed, I will take a direct personal role in this issue.

36. What is your assessment of the results of the recently reported survey of military members on the prevalence of sexual assault in the Armed Services?

The existence of sexual assault within our ranks is deeply disturbing and the conduct is utterly unacceptable. The Department must continue its work to eliminate sexual assault. The incidence of sexual assault and the percentage of victims who are retaliated against or concerned about retaliation remain unacceptably high. I am particularly concerned by the finding that a substantial portion of victims perceived some level of retaliation associated with their sexual assault report, including alienation and other forms of social ostracism from their peers. This destroys good order and discipline and fosters a climate that is inconsistent with the dignity and respect that our service members deserve.

37. What is the status of the review of the Manual for Courts-Martial directed by Secretary Hagel and when do you anticipate the Department will provide a report on this review to this Committee?

I understand that at Secretary Hagel's direction, the Department of Defense's Military Justice Review Group (MJRG) is conducting a comprehensive review of the military justice system. It is my understanding that the MJRG will issue two reports, one in March 2015 recommending changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and one in September 2015 recommending changes to the Manual for Courts-Martial. If confirmed, I anticipate directing the relevant Department of Defense Components to review the reports and recommendations for appropriate action, and if necessary, proposed legislation.

38. Secretary Hagel conducted a weekly oversight review to ensure continued progress on implementing legislative changes intended to combat sexual assault. If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure senior level direction and oversight of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assaults?

If confirmed, my personal involvement will be frequent and regular, which will guide the Department to adapt its sexual assault policies and systems with agility. If confirmed, I plan to continue this personal commitment to eliminating sexual assault in our ranks and restoring victim confidence in our response system. I recognize that it will be critical to work closely with Congress and Service leaders to deliver consistent and effective prevention initiatives to influence behavior with the goal of eliminating the crime of sexual assault across the Department.

39. What is your assessment of the military's protections against retaliation for reporting sexual assault?

Based on the recent report to the President, they are not adequate. The report underscores the need to better understand the complex ways in which the retaliation manifests itself, and to

ensure that victims of sexual assault have choices in the form of assistance they engage to address this behavior. If confirmed, this effort will be a priority of mine.

40. What is your assessment of military programs for the prevention of domestic abuse, including spousal rape?

The Department is committed to addressing the prevention of and response to domestic abuse, including spousal rape, which is a serious public health issue. The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is a comprehensive Department-wide program that provides victim advocacy and counseling for victims and offender treatment programs. FAP utilizes evidenced-based programs to address domestic abuse, and works in collaboration with Command, medical, legal, and law enforcement to support victims of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect. FAP collaborates closely with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office and shares best practices on victim assistance.

Role of National Guard and Reserves

41. What is your understanding and assessment of the Reserve Components' size and force structure, including mix of capabilities and capacities, to meet the requirements of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the current National Military Strategy?

The seven reserve components have proven essential during 13 years of war and natural disasters at home. I understand that questions about the size and makeup of the Active Component (AC) and Reserve Component (RC) are currently under consideration as the Department continues to implement the new defense strategy and respond to the current fiscal environment. If confirmed, I will insure that the Military Departments, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the combatant commanders work closely together to determine the most effective mix and makeup of Active, Reserve and Guard personnel to maximize the value of these organizations in a way that is balanced against needs.

42. In your view, what is the definition of "operational reserve" when referring to the Reserve Components?

In my view, the term "operational reserve" refers to our need to have a Reserve Component that is made ready and available to operate in peacetime, in wartime and in support of civil authorities.

43. What is your understanding and assessment of how the concept of an "operational reserve" is currently used by the Department for Reserve Component sizing, force structure, readiness reporting and evaluation, and resourcing? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose regarding the use of the concept of an "operational reserve" with respect to the Reserve Components?

The National Guard and Reserve is a critical source of many of the capabilities required in

ongoing operations and contingency surge requirements. As an operational reserve the Reserve Component would make certain capabilities available on a continuing basis and others to augment and reinforce the active components when mobilized over time.

44. In your view, what are the most significant challenges to the realization of the Reserve Component as an “operational reserve”? If confirmed, what actions would you propose taking, if any, to deal with these challenges?

In my view, some of the most significant challenges in employing the Total Force are declining resources and the subsequent impacts on the Services' abilities to man, train and equip the Force. If confirmed, I will insure the service chiefs, the chief of the National Guard Bureau and the combatant commanders work together to balance the Total Force.

45. What is your understanding and assessment of current statutory authorities for the mobilization and utilization of members of the Reserve Component? If confirmed, what changes in law would you propose, if any, to make Reserve Component mobilization and utilization more efficient and effective or to enhance their ability to perform various national security or domestic support to civil authorities missions?

Current statutory authorities make the Reserve Component an accessible force. If confirmed I will insure the service chiefs, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the combatant commanders review lessons learned after over a decade of unprecedented mobilization to determine if changes are needed to make mobilization and utilization of our Reserve Component more efficient and effective. Key considerations in this review are early notification for deployments, mobilization lengths, dwell-to-mobilization targets and predictability for the service personnel, families and employers.

Active-Duty and Reserve Component End Strength

The Department is implementing its 5-year plan to reduce active-duty end strengths by over 100,000 service members by 2017, and the reserve components by another 21,000 over the same period. These cuts do not include any additional personnel reductions that could result from sequestration or any agreement to avoid sequestration.

46. Do you agree with this plan to reduce active-duty and reserve component end strengths?

My understanding is that these planned reductions reflect an effort to balance the capability, capacity and the readiness impacts of budget reductions with the requirements of the defense strategy.

47. How will these reductions impact the armed forces' ability to meet national defense requirements?

Fiscal uncertainty and new operational demands driven by unforeseen world events have the potential to jeopardize the Services' ability to both provide ready forces for today's fight and guarantee ready forces for tasked operational plans.

48. What additional military personnel reductions do you envision if the Department is required to operate under the budget caps for fiscal year 2016 as currently set out in law?

If sequester returns in 2016, I believe the Services may be compelled to implement additional force structure reductions. The consequences of sequestration have been significant for the Joint Force and its ability to meet our strategic objectives. The Department needs to continually examine the force structure and personnel levels required to meet our national security objectives.

49. In your view, what tools do the Department and Services need to get down to authorized strengths in the future, and which of these require Congressional authorization?

My understanding is that Congress has supported the Department with the force shaping tools necessary to meet the drawdown under its current plan. However, further budget reductions would make it necessary to revisit the size of all components of the Total Force--- Active Duty, Reserve Component, DoD civilians, and contractors. Consequently, future assessment may require us to request additional Congressional authorization for force shaping tools.

Women in the Military

50. Do you believe that the services are conducting appropriate and objective evaluations to inform decisions on the integration of women into previously closed units and military occupations?

It is my understanding that the Services and U.S. Special Operations Command have been conducting evaluations in accordance with their respective implementation plans. If confirmed, I will closely monitor their progress and ensure they stay on track and meet the Department's timelines. If I receive requests for exception to policy, I will carefully consider them when the time comes.

51. In your view, should the Military Selective Service Act be amended to require females to register for possible military service?

I understand a recent law requires the Department to provide an analysis of the constitutionality of continued application of the Military Selective Service Act to only men.

52. In your view, and if the Military Selective Service Act is so revised, in a future exigency in which the Nation may need to implement a draft, are there any reasons why qualified males and females should not be subject to the draft?

Given that the Armed Forces have waged the longest continuous conflict in our history with an All-Volunteer Force, and the fact that most military career fields are now open to women, a review of the military selective service act would be prudent. This is not solely a Defense issue, but rather part of a much broader national discussion.

Costs of Medical Care

53. What is your assessment of the long-term impact of the Department's rising health care costs on military readiness and overall national security?

In a constrained fiscal environment, if confirmed, I will seek a balanced approach to control rising health care costs by continuing to drive greater efficiencies within the system and to pursue reasonable health benefit reforms that offers exceptional value to our beneficiaries.

54. If confirmed, what actions would you take to mitigate the effect of the Department's rising medical costs on DOD's budget top-line while simultaneously implementing programs to improve health outcomes and to enhance the experience of care for all beneficiaries?

Controlling health care costs is a priority for the Department. In recent years, additional emphasis was placed on achieving savings and efficiencies within the operational environment of the Military Health System (MHS). However, these internal savings initiatives are not enough to curb the projected increase in health care costs for the Department in the coming years. In addition to internal savings, I understand that DoD is trying to reform TRICARE into a more integrated health care system, which is less complex and provides greater choice and value to our beneficiaries.

The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission report provides another set of proposals that require careful review and consideration. If confirmed, I will work with Congress on all responsible efforts to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the health system.

55. If confirmed, what would you do to create a value-based military health system – a system that creates value for beneficiaries and the Department by ensuring the delivery of quality health care and improving health outcomes for beneficiaries at reasonable costs to beneficiaries and DOD?

A value-based military health system starts with the department's ability to meet the DoD mission. Unlike civilian healthcare systems, the primary mission of the MHS is to ensure a medically ready force and a medical force that is ready to carry out its wartime mission. The

Army, Navy, and Air Force medical services maintain that primary mission through the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). The MTFs alone cannot provide the care for all beneficiaries and therefore the TRICARE program is a critical component to the integrated health system.

Defense Health Agency

In 2013, as Deputy Secretary of Defense, you signed a DOD directive that chartered a new Defense Health Agency (DHA) to reform the governance and management of the Military Health System.

56. What efficiencies and related savings have resulted from establishment of the DHA?

Although it's still in its infancy, the DHA stood up ten shared services and I understand it is reducing performance variation across the Military Health System (MHS). The DHA was critical to facilitating a coordinated implementation of the MHS Review, which focused on access to care, quality, and patient safety. The DHA's focus on business process reengineering is looking to achieve a net savings in such areas as pharmacy operations, health information technology and medical logistics. Another goal is to improve coordination of care in our largest health care markets, now being governed as enhanced multi-service markets.

57. If confirmed, how would you ensure continued progress towards making the military health system a more efficient health care delivery system while improving health outcomes for beneficiaries?

The MHS, like most other health care systems in this country, needs to provide efficient, quality health care that is safe and effective, whether delivered on a battlefield or in one of our hospitals. If confirmed, I will direct those responsible to look for ways to improve not only the efficiency and performance of the system, but I will insist that critical medical capabilities are ready to support our warfighters anywhere and anytime.

Integrated Electronic Health Record (EHR)

Last year, DOD published a RFP for a modern EHR with plans to award a contract in 2015 with an estimated total life cycle cost of over \$11B.

58. Considering the many problems the Department has experienced with its existing EHR and its failure to deploy a modern EHR over many years despite strong congressional support, do you have confidence that the Department will finally be successful with this effort?

I have not had the opportunity to review the program status since leaving the Department, but, if confirmed, I will direct those responsible to keep me fully informed of its status.

59. If confirmed, what would you do to ensure this procurement comes in on time and on budget without any waste of taxpayers' money?

I am committed to ensuring that our EHR solution meets the needs of our Service members while providing maximum value for the taxpayer. The timely and cost-effective acquisition and deployment of a new, modern EHR system is one of the department's top priorities in the health care area.

60. If confirmed, how would you work with the VA secretary to ensure DOD and VA will seamlessly share real-time health information electronically?

If confirmed, I fully intend to personally continue the close collaboration that has been ongoing between the DoD and VA, and will personally engage with Secretary McDonald. Interoperability of our medical records system with theirs will be essential to the success of the EHR solution.

Health Care Quality and Access to Care in the Military Health System (MHS)

If confirmed, what actions would you take with respect to each of the following:

61. Eliminating performance variability throughout the MHS;

I am aware that the MHS Review ordered by Secretary Hagel demonstrated that there is performance variability both among and within our Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs). We need to develop a more robust enterprise-wide capability to establish common performance measures, identify associated standards, monitor performance relative to those standards, and mitigate critical deficiencies. I understand the Department has begun to create these capabilities, and I will make it a priority to oversee their successful implementation.

62. Improving health outcomes of the Department's beneficiaries in the direct and purchased care components of the MHS;

If confirmed, I will direct that the MHS has a well-developed performance management system that permits data-driven decisions. Leaders will be held accountable for continuous improvement of outcomes in both the direct and purchased care systems.

63. Delivering quality health care at lower cost to create value for beneficiaries and the Department; and

Improved readiness, better care and better health outcomes for our beneficiaries while operating the MHS more efficiently and at lower cost will create better value for those we

serve as well as the taxpayers. The MHS should continue the enterprise management reforms to standardize business and clinical processes with a goal to optimize utilization, effectiveness and reduce variability.

64. Promoting transparency of information that will help beneficiaries become more involved in making their healthcare decisions.

The department has developed a plan to increase transparency throughout the MHS for beneficiaries and key stakeholders. If confirmed, I will ensure that those directly responsible will review this plan and its implementation to make certain the Department and the MHS has met its obligation to meet the information needs of beneficiaries so that they can make important decisions about their healthcare.

Mental Health Care

65. If confirmed, what actions would you take to ensure that sufficient mental health resources are available to service members in theater and to service members and families upon return to home station locations with insufficient community-based mental health resources?

If confirmed, I will support efforts to reduce the stigma associated with seeking mental health care, encourage help-seeking behavior and increase the use of available resources among Service members and their families. This would include an integrated approach for ongoing mental health research, prevention, and evidence-based treatment efforts that will continue to allow the Department to provide high-quality, timely mental healthcare services. Finally, I will continue to work with the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Health and Human Services to coordinate mental health initiatives on behalf of Service members, Veterans and their families.

66. If confirmed, what would you do to ensure that robust mental health resources are available for Guard and Reserve members and their families?

If confirmed, I will ensure those directly responsible remain committed to ensuring the Reserve Components receive all medical and mental health resources necessary to meet their needs and promote smooth re-integration. This begins with ensuring pre and post-deployment health and mental health assessments with prompt referral for those identified as having needs. Additionally, I will ensure those directly responsible work with the VA leadership to improve processes for "hand-offs" to prevent lapses in services. I will continue to assess the adequacy of family support/re-integration programs that are vital to support Service members and their families who are facing mental health problems.

Suicide Prevention

67. If confirmed, how would you maintain a strong focus on preventing suicides in the active and reserve components and in their families?

The Department of Defense has a strong and long-standing relationship with public and private partners and has recently adopted the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, which is being integrated into the Department's strategy. If confirmed, I will ensure those directly responsible support all efforts to examine gaps and overlaps in efforts across the Department to ensure we provide the best policies and programs to both prevent suicide and build resilience.

Personnel and Entitlement Costs

68. What do you believe to be an appropriate percentage of the Department's budget for military personnel costs?

While military personnel costs have historically been roughly one-third of the Department's overall budget, pegging these costs to a specific percentage of the budget is not a useful metric for managing the force or executing the national defense strategy. The Department must maintain the force at sufficient levels with the right capabilities to meet the national defense strategy. Providing an appropriate pay and benefits package is essential to this task, but compensation and benefit costs must be balanced with readiness and modernization requirements to ensure we maintain the highest quality, ready, and modern military force now and for the future.

69. If this percentage remains constant as overall defense spending flattens, or even declines in real terms, what would be the impact on the size of the force and the Department's ability to execute the national defense strategy?

If overall defense spending flattens or declines in real terms, military personnel costs will increase as a percentage of the budget in the short-term and, therefore, require larger reductions to readiness and modernization. In the longer-term, additional force reductions will likely be required to balance the program. The resulting smaller force would create additional risk to meet our security challenges.

70. In your view, what would be the impact on other areas of the Department's budget if military personnel costs continue to rise while the overall defense budget remains flat, or even declines in real terms?

If military personnel costs were to continue to rise within a flat budget, consuming ever larger portions of that budget, the nation will face the prospect of a hollow force -- with resulting decreasing capability and readiness and a dwindling technological edge on the battlefield.

71. What actions do you believe can and should be taken, if any, to control the rise in personnel costs and entitlement spending?

Personnel costs are a significant portion of the Defense budget. During the past several years the Department engaged in a number of broad-based reviews in search of efficiencies and generated proposals to reduce spending. The Congress, too, created the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission in search of ways to attract and retain the quality people we need while controlling these personnel and entitlement costs. If confirmed, I will seek ways to keep our current and future force and our defense program in balance within the resources Congress provides.

Recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 established a commission to review all elements of the military compensation and retirement systems and to make recommendations to modernize those systems to ensure the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, enable a high quality of life for military families, and to achieve fiscal sustainability for the compensation and retirement systems. That Commission will release its report on January 29, 2015.

72. If confirmed, what will be your plan to review the report and to provide recommendations to the President?

I appreciate the difficult task that was presented to the Commission. If confirmed, I intend to carefully review and evaluate the Commission's recommendations on reforming military compensation and retirement.

73. Will you instruct the Department to take the Commission's recommendations into consideration within the base budget request for fiscal year 2017?

If confirmed, I would expect the Department to fully consider the recommendations of the Commission in future budgets.

Religious Accommodation in the Military

74. In your view, do Department of Defense policies concerning religious accommodation in the military appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs, including individual expressions of belief, without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

The current DoD policies appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion by all Service members. The Department respects, and supports by its policy, the rights of individuals to express their own religious beliefs, including the right to hold no religious beliefs.

75. Do you agree that the primary role of the chaplaincy is to provide for the free exercise of religion by all service members and that chaplains are sufficiently trained to perform or provide for this constitutional right in today’s pluralistic military community? If not, why not?

The Service Chaplaincies advise and assist commanders in the discharge of their responsibility to provide for the free exercise of religion in the context of military service and to assist commanders in managing Religious Affairs. Chaplains also serve as the principal advisors on all issues regarding the impact of religion on military operations. I believe Military Chaplains should be sufficiently trained to carry out their assigned duties.

76. Do you believe it is the role of the chaplaincy to provide for the religious and spiritual well-being of all members of the armed forces, regardless of their faith beliefs?

In today’s pluralistic military environment, the Chaplaincies of the Military Departments recruit, access, train and equip chaplains with the knowledge and skill to balance their own faith practices with their role in assisting commanders in providing for the free exercise of religion and spiritual well-being of all service members, including those who may hold different or no religious beliefs.

77. Do you believe that current policies provide sufficient guidance to chaplains who conduct non-religious command training where attendance is required or encouraged to allow chaplains to discuss their religious faith anecdotally and respectfully in a pluralistic setting to support the training objectives?

It is my understanding that DoD policies provide sufficient guidance to chaplains concerning respectful incorporation of religious and belief principles that support training objectives in a pluralistic setting. Such policies also protect the right of a chaplain to refuse, without any adverse action, this type of duty if it is contrary to his or her conscience, moral principles or religious beliefs.

Strategy

According to the force sizing construct in the 2014 QDR, U.S. forces should be able to “defeat a regional adversary in a large-scale multi-phased campaign, and deny the objectives of – or impose unacceptable costs on – another aggressor in another region.”

78. In your opinion, is the QDR’s force sizing construct an adequate approach given the dynamics of the current and projected geostrategic and fiscal environments?

The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review envisioned a complex and variable security environment coupled with fiscal uncertainty. Therefore, it directed the Department to size and shape the Joint Force to respond to a wide range of challenges. At the Fiscal Year 2015 President’s Budget level, the force planning construct depicts the challenges that the

Department must be prepared to respond to and frames its efforts to deliver agile, technologically advanced forces of sufficient size to defend our Nation and secure our interests globally while preventing America's adversaries from achieving their objectives. However, as underscored in the QDR, the force planning construct cannot be fully resourced at sequestration-level funding, casting significant doubt on the Department's ability to implement its overall defense strategy at that reduced budget level.

79. In your view, are the services currently adequately sized to meet the requirements of the QDR and current National Military Strategy?

U.S. forces remain able to prevail in more than one conflict at a time, but at higher levels of risk given the cumulative effects of reduced funding, an uncertain budget process, and unrealized force structure and compensation savings. The force will need to become smaller and more efficient over the next five years to offset the costs of gradual modernization and improved readiness. Provided sequestration is avoided, the QDR indicated that the Joint Force will remain able to defeat a regional adversary while denying the objectives of, or imposing unacceptable costs upon, a second aggressor. In addition, the force will remain able to conduct sustained, distributed counterterrorism operations and protect the homeland. However, the QDR also indicated even in the best case, the margin for error in executing the defense strategy is smaller than it has been in many years and requires close cooperation between the Administration and Congress to realize necessary savings in force structure and compensation reform to ensure that the strategy can be implemented.

80. If confirmed, how would you propose to manage the risk associated with the demands placed upon the Department by the National Security Strategy, the requirements of the National Military Strategy, the geostrategic environment, U.S. international security commitments, and the availability of military capability in an era of declining resources?

Risks associated with the demands upon the Department must be managed by striking a balance between force capacity, readiness, and modernization in order to be prepared for an uncertain and complicated future. In some cases, and in line with the 2014 QDR, capacity will be reduced to allow for necessary modernization and readiness. The Department plans to continue several internal measures to manage risk, including developing innovative business practices, capabilities, and operational concepts; revising and updating operational plans; enhancing collaboration with allies and partners; reviewing overseas access and basing agreements; resetting the force after two wars; and striving for efficiencies and compensation reform. A return to Budget Control Act-level funding in FY16 would increase risks, prolong readiness recovery, and delay necessary modernization programs.

81. In your view should we accept higher risk with current strategy, change the strategy, or increase resources to increase or preserve military capability and capacity?

The Department concluded that the FY15 budget, combined with Congressional support for the Department's proposed reforms, will enable our military to execute the current strategy. If sequestration level cuts return in FY16 or if we do not gain Congressional support for

proposed force structure reductions and compensation reforms, we may need to revisit the strategy as updated in the 2012 QDR.

82. What is your understanding and assessment of excess capacity or capabilities, if any, relative to the National Military Strategy? In your view, if there is excess capacity or capability relative to the strategy should it be reallocated across services to reduce risks in areas for which there are gaps?

The 2014 QDR assessed that after more than twelve years of conflict and amid ongoing budget reductions, the Joint Force was out of balance with respect to capability, capacity, and readiness. As those wars have come to a close, the Department has sought to return these Services to a sustainable budget level and end strength. Looking forward, the Department, with Congressional assistance, needs to continue the process to ensure we deliver agile, technologically advanced, ready forces of sufficient size to defend our Nation and secure our interests while evolving threats and challenges.

Detainee Treatment Policy

83. Do you support the policy set forth in the July 7, 2006, memorandum issued by the Deputy Secretary of Defense stating that all relevant DOD directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures must fully comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

84. 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.

85. If confirmed, will you ensure that all DOD policies promulgated and plans implemented related to intelligence interrogations, detainee debriefings, and tactical questioning comply with the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual on Interrogations?

Yes.

86. Do you share the view that standards for detainee treatment must be based on the principle of reciprocity, that is, that we must always keep in mind the risk that the manner in which we treat our own detainees may have a direct impact on the manner in which U.S. soldiers, sailors, airmen or marines are treated,

should they be captured in future conflicts?

Yes.

National Military Strategy and Stability Operations

87. In light of Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the growth of ISIL and its control over large areas of Syria and Iraq, and a more muscular China, do you believe that the current National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy should be updated to more accurately account for a changed global security environment?

Although it is impossible to predict exactly how challenges will develop, we must continue to reexamine global threats to ensure our resources match the threats and opportunities ahead.

The 2010 National Security Strategy is undergoing a necessary revision, to be released in early 2015. Any revisions should address the challenges to the international order and stability that are posed by Russia’s occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea and the growth of ISIL, recognizing that the United States is strongest when it employs all elements of national power to address security threats in a coordinated fashion. The United States welcomes the rise of a prosperous, peaceful, and stable China that respects international law and settles disputes without the threat or use of force. The National Military Strategy should be revised to align with the 2015 National Security Strategy, once it is released.

The January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance called for U.S. forces to be ready to conduct limited counterinsurgency and other stability operations if required, and to retain and continue to refine the lessons learned, expertise, and specialized capabilities that have been gained over the past 10 years of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, the Strategic Guidance states that, “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations.”

88. In your view, how should strategic guidance for the Department of Defense manage risk and articulate the types of missions or operations U.S. forces will or will not be expected to execute?

The Department’s strategic guidance documents – especially the Quadrennial Defense Review and National Military Strategy – need to identify the kind of security environment that we anticipate in the future and seek an appropriate balance between capability, capacity, and readiness. As a full spectrum force and a global leader, the United States military should continue to be prepared to execute missions in the national interest across the threat spectrum. A full spectrum, ready and modern Joint Force is the best risk mitigation measure.

89. In your view, what are the appropriate roles and responsibilities, if any, of the Department of Defense and between the Department of Defense and other departments and agencies of the Federal Government in the planning and

conduct of stability operations?

Because of its unique capabilities, the Department should support other U.S. Government departments and agencies in the planning and execution of stability operations efforts. History has shown that coordinated and integrated interagency and international efforts are essential to successful stability operations. Under the right circumstances, the Department should conduct stability operations activities to establish security, restore essential services, repair and protect the most critical infrastructure, and deliver humanitarian assistance. As security and public order are established or restored, the Department should transition responsibility to other agencies, foreign governments, or international governmental organizations.

90. If confirmed, in developing the capabilities necessary for stability operations, what adjustments, if any, would you propose making to prepare U.S. forces to conduct stability operations without detracting from their ability to perform combat missions?

If confirmed, I would assess the requirements for U.S. forces to conduct stability operations successfully without detracting from or degrading their ability to perform combat missions. After nearly two decades of serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, and elsewhere, U.S. forces have made great strides in their abilities to conduct stability operations under difficult circumstances. If confirmed, I would seek to maintain the stability operations expertise the Department has gained, and ensure that the Military Departments have the mechanisms necessary to expand their capacities when required.

91. In your view, does the U.S. government need to define or reallocate responsibilities and authorities among federal agencies, and establish new procedures to manage stability operations? If so, why?

Our efforts abroad over the past 13-plus years highlight the importance of collaborative and coordinated planning with interagency and international partners, which is fundamental to the successful management and effectiveness of stability operations. As we have seen in both Iraq and Afghanistan, it takes a robust interagency effort, as well as international participation, to develop institutions that can contribute effectively to peace, security and stability. If confirmed, I would review the Department's policies and procedures with respect to stability operations and make appropriate recommendations to ensure our success, both as a department and as part of the U.S. Government as a whole.

92. If confirmed, what recommendations would you make, if any, to improve U.S. Government approach to planning, resourcing, and conducting stability operations?

If confirmed, I would work with other departments and agencies to explore opportunities to integrate and coordinate the full range of available interagency stabilization tools and make appropriate recommendations.

Strategy in Iraq and Syria

On 10 September 2014, President Obama said “Our objective is clear: We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counter-terrorism strategy.”

93. What criteria do you believe should be used to evaluate whether or how much ISIL is degraded and what is your assessment of the progress to degrade ISIL in Iraq and in Syria?

The U.S. is at the beginning of what could be a long campaign to degrade and inflict a lasting defeat on ISIL. DoD's contributions are one part of a whole-of-government strategy and an effort that includes many of coalition partners to create both the political and military conditions needed for success. Ultimately the Iraqis must offer a national program of reform and reconciliation in order for the Iraqi Security Forces to succeed. The coalition effort must also involve strengthening and working with the Iraqi Security Forces and affiliated Kurdish and tribal elements, who are critical to inflict a lasting defeat of ISIL. If confirmed, I will consult closely with my military commanders, civilian advisors, foreign partners, interagency counterparts and Members of Congress to examine progress and offer my best strategic advice to the President on this complex and vitally important campaign.

94. Do you believe the strategy against ISIL needs to include both conventional and counterinsurgency elements given that ISIL has demonstrated significant conventional and insurgency capabilities?

Yes. I believe that a strategy for countering ISIL must bring to bear all elements of national power, including military force as well as diplomatic, intelligence, economic, humanitarian assistance, and other key tools. Many of these tools are important in a counterinsurgency as well as a conventional campaign. If confirmed, I would continue to support a whole-of-government approach.

95. What does the end state President Obama has declared to be the objective of our operations - “ultimately destroy ISIL” - look like in your opinion?

I believe that ISIL must no longer be a threat to Iraq, the region, the United States, and our partners.

A large part of the support for ISIL and other extremist groups like al Nusrah by the local Syrian population is based on the fact that these groups pledge to go after President Assad, to remove him from power.

96. Is removing Assad part of the current U.S. strategy in Syria? If not, what is your assessment of the impact of not going after Assad on our ability to work with the Syrian population to counter ISIL and other extremist groups like al Nusra?

As the President has said, Assad has lost legitimacy and cannot be a part of the long-term future of Syria. However, the most immediate threat to U.S. national interests is ISIL – and there is no sustainable solution in Syria without addressing the threat of ISIL. If confirmed, I will consult with my military commanders, civilian advisors, interagency partners, foreign counterparts and Members of Congress to formulate by best strategic advice for the President.

The Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes assistance in Iraq to “local security forces with a national security mission” including “tribal security forces or other local security forces.”

97. How important do you consider arming of the Sunni tribes in Anbar province to degrading ISIL and how do you assess progress to date?

Political inclusion in Iraq is a key element of countering ISIL in a lasting way. Integrating Sunni tribal fighters into the Iraqi Security Forces and enabling them to combat ISIL is therefore important to ultimately defeating ISIL. I have not been briefed in detail on this effort. If confirmed, I would continue to work with the Department of State, coalition partners, and the Government of Iraq to encourage efforts to arm and integrate Sunni tribal forces into the Iraqi Security Forces to fight ISIL.

Afghanistan Strategy

98. What lessons should we learn from the experience of a calendar-based drawdown of U.S. troops in Iraq as they apply to executing the drawdown of U.S. and international troops in Afghanistan?

Each country has a unique set of underlying governance, security, and cultural circumstances. With the U.S.-Afghanistan Bilateral Security Agreement in place, and with the support of the Afghan Government, the Department’s train, advise, and assist mission with the Afghan security forces is intended to help ensure continued progress in developing Afghanistan’s security capabilities and preserve the security gains we have made collectively. Based on what we have learned in Iraq, progress on political reform is key to this effort. I believe that the new government in Kabul will be the biggest driver in whether Afghanistan has a positive future. I welcome that President Ghani has stated that a continued U.S. and NATO presence is an important component of his strategy for Afghanistan. That provides a key foundation for the transition to a robust, sustainable security relationship in the future. I am mindful of the new and dynamic global threat environment, and you can be assured that if there are instructive lessons from Iraq or anywhere else that are relevant to Afghanistan, I will always take them into account in the advice I offer to the President.

99. If confirmed, are there changes you would recommend to the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan?

The next two years represent an important transition period from more than a decade of war toward an enduring defense relationship with an Afghan partner that is capable of providing for its own security and preventing al Qaeda and other extremists from threatening U.S. interests. The NATO-led train, advise, and assist mission and the U.S. counterterrorism mission are cornerstones within our overall strategy that will provide the Afghans an opportunity to make progress on the security situation in Afghanistan, and serve as a balance against terrorist exploitation of Afghan territory. If confirmed, I will continue to seek the advice of our military leadership and partners.

100. What is your assessment of the progress of the campaign in Afghanistan?

Over the last 13 years, our campaign in Afghanistan has placed constant pressure on al Qaeda and prevented Afghanistan from being used to launch terrorist attacks against the U.S. homeland. The U.S. government has supported the Afghan people and protected U.S. national interests by helping Afghanistan strengthen the capacity of its security forces. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) have continued to progress, and have proven increasingly capable in leading operations and prevailing over insurgents. Although I am encouraged by the positive strides made in Afghanistan, it is clear that much work remains to be done. We must stay engaged with our Afghan partners and support them, as they own the fight. This must be an interagency and international effort – with appropriate funding for the ANSF as well as economic and diplomatic support for the Afghan people.

101. If reports of ISIL operating in southern Afghanistan are true, and ISIL is fighting with the Taliban, how should that affect the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan?

I support the President's strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL, wherever it may attempt to establish a foothold. I am aware of recent press reporting that ISIL is attempting to recruit militants in Afghanistan and is considering expansion to the region. If confirmed, I will learn more about these developments and will work with the Afghan Government and our coalition partners to address all terrorist threats to U.S. personnel in Afghanistan and to prevent any terrorist groups from using Afghanistan to threaten the United States and our allies and partners.

102. If security conditions on the ground in Afghanistan degrade in 2016, would you consider recommending to the President revisions to the size and pace of the drawdown plan announced by the President in order to adequately address those security conditions?

Yes.

103. In your opinion, should the authorities granted to the commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan take into account the security conditions on the ground faced by U.S. troops?

If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, I will take seriously my responsibility to ensure that our commander in Afghanistan has the authority needed to execute the missions directed by the President effectively, and that these authorities allow U.S. forces to take the appropriate measures to protect themselves.

Afghanistan National Security Forces

104. What is your assessment of the progress in developing a professional and effective Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF)?

If confirmed, I will assess this issue firsthand but my assessment has been positive. I will ensure that the Department continues building the ANSF's institutional capabilities, and I will work with our allies and partners to retain critical coalition support to the ANSF where capability gaps remain, particularly in the areas of close air support, intelligence, special operations, sustainment, and Afghan security ministry capacity.

105. What do you see as the main challenges to building the capacity of the ANSF and, if confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you make for addressing those challenges?

I understand that the main challenges to address with the ANSF are fielding and integrating capabilities such as close air support, special operations, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and developing the capacity of the Ministries of Defense and Interior to manage planning, programming, budgeting, logistics, force generation and force sustainment. Corruption and the flow of funding from illicit narcotics is also a significant challenge that requires an international and interagency response. If confirmed, I will assess our progress in helping the ANSF develop these areas and will focus on solutions to identified gaps.

106. What are the key enablers in security force capabilities that need to continue to be developed to ensure the long term efficacy of the ANSF against the Taliban and other extremists and when do you forecast those capabilities will be in place?

I understand that the NATO Resolute Support mission places a high priority on developing the ANSF's capability to provide fire support from the air, and on developing organic airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to maintain advantages over the Taliban and other extremists.

107. Do you support plans for building and sustaining the ANSF at 352,000 personnel?

Based on the information available to me and given Afghanistan's current security challenges, I support the current authorized level of 352,000 ANSF personnel and will work with Congress to ensure that our efforts to sustain this force are appropriately resourced. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department will continue to work with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior to determine the timing for reducing the ANSF to an appropriate size, given available resources, capabilities, and the magnitude of the threat.

108. Do you agree that any reductions in the ANSF from this 352,000 level should be based on security conditions in Afghanistan at the time those reductions would be expected to occur?

Although the security condition on the ground will be a critical factor in determining any future reductions in the ANSF, we must also look closely at the Afghan ability to sustain the ANSF financially. My understanding is that current Resolute Support mission efforts are focused on optimizing the effectiveness of the ANSF force structure while increasing the Afghan capability to sustain that structure. I believe we have an obligation to the Afghan people, our allies, and U.S. taxpayers, to ensure that the ANSF is a combat-effective, sustainable, and affordable force in the long-term.

Reconciliation

109. In your view, what should be the role of the United States in any reconciliation negotiations with the Afghan Taliban and other insurgent groups?

The United States supports an Afghan-led political peace process in which all opposition groups, including the Taliban, engage in a dialogue about the future of their country. I believe the United States should continue to support President Ghani's efforts to engage in peace talks, as long as any outcome of reconciliation includes that the Taliban and other armed groups end violence, break ties with al-Qaeda, and accept Afghanistan's constitution – including its protections for women and minorities.

110. What additional steps, if any, should the United States be taking to help advance the reconciliation process?

President Obama has made clear that an Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process is the surest way to end the violence and ensure lasting stability for Afghanistan and the region. It is my understanding that President Ghani is putting considerable effort into re-energizing reconciliation and is reaching out to regional partners and the international community to take part in the process. I believe the United States should support these new initiatives and, if confirmed, I look forward to engaging with my Afghan counterparts on how the Department of Defense can best support reconciliation efforts.

111. In your view, what should be the role of Afghanistan's neighbors, in particular Pakistan, in the reconciliation process?

Afghanistan's neighbors should play constructive and supportive roles in an Afghan-led reconciliation process, since a stable and peaceful Afghanistan will promote long-term

stability and prosperity for the entire region. I hope signs of improved Afghanistan-Pakistan relations provide fresh opportunities for Pakistan to reinforce President Ghani's efforts toward peace talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban.

U.S. Strategic Relationship with Pakistan

112. What would you consider to be areas of shared strategic interest between the United States and Pakistan?

Counterterrorism cooperation remains a critical shared strategic interest. Pakistan still faces a real and potent threat from several militant groups within its borders, such as the Pakistani Taliban, responsible for the recent school attack in Peshawar.

We also share Pakistan's strategic interest in improved relations between Islamabad and Kabul. I believe that the United States and Pakistan should continue to work to promote peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan and to improve regional security.

113. In what areas do you see U.S. and Pakistani strategic interests diverging?

It is important that the United States continues to engage with Pakistan in areas where our strategic interests diverge, including the direction of Pakistan's nuclear program and its tolerance of terrorist organizations like the Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e Taiba. In addition to threatening U.S. forces in Afghanistan, these groups threaten regional security, endanger the prospects of a political settlement in Afghanistan, and undermine Pakistan's own stability. I understand that Pakistan has pledged to target all militant groups operating within its borders, including the Haqqani Network and Lashkar-e Taiba. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department holds Pakistan to this pledge, and works against actors who are exploiting Pakistani territory to destabilize the region.

114. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend for U.S. relations with Pakistan, particularly in terms of military-to-military relations?

If confirmed, I would continue to work on improving our relationship with Pakistan by collaborating where our strategic interests converge and engaging where they diverge. Moving forward, I believe it is in the United States' interest to expand counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan in our fight against al-Qaeda, and to counter any emerging threats. Additionally, I would seek to facilitate cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and encourage communication between Pakistan and India, as these relationships will continue to be vital to stability in the region.

U.S. Assistance to Pakistan

Since 2001, the United States has provided significant military assistance to Pakistan. In addition, the United States has provided significant funds to reimburse

Pakistan for the costs associated with military operations conducted by Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border

115. In your view, how effective has the assistance and other support that the United States has provided to Pakistan been in promoting U.S. interests?

I understand that since last summer, Pakistani forces have been clearing militants from their strongholds along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Pakistan's military has been able to carry out these operations at a more effective pace and scale in part thanks to U.S. reimbursements for Pakistan's operational expenses. Additionally, I understand U.S. security assistance programs have provided the Pakistan military with many of the tools necessary to conduct successful operations in this region. Continued U.S. support will remain critical to the success of these efforts.

116. Do you support conditioning U.S. assistance and other support to Pakistan on Pakistan's continued cooperation in areas of mutual security interest?

If confirmed, I will consult within the Department and the U.S. interagency on how best to incentivize Pakistani action that is in the mutual interest of the United States. The United States and Pakistan do work together on common objectives, and I believe we should carefully examine the impact of conditions on Pakistani cooperation. If confirmed, I will evaluate what additional support would be appropriate from the U.S. government.

Libya

Following the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli on July 26, 2014, there is no longer an active American presence in the country and the situation in country remains dire.

117. What role, if any, should the United States have in Libya moving forward?

The United States has a national security interest in a stable Libya and in preventing its use as a terrorist safe haven. The United States should assist the ongoing United Nations-led political process to bring moderate Libyans into a unity government and bring an end to the conflict - which exacerbates the terrorist threat - and take measures to prevent terrorists from using Libya as a safe haven. When circumstances allow, the United States should once again consider supporting official Libyan security forces and their development.

U.S. Marine Corps Support to the State Department Embassy Evacuations

The Accountability Review Board for Benghazi supported the "State Department's initiative to request additional Marines and expand the Marine Security Guard (MSG) Program – as well as corresponding requirements for staffing and funding. The Board also recommended that the State Department and DOD identify additional flexible MSG structures and request further resources for the Department

and DOD to provide more capabilities and capacities at higher risk posts.” The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 authorized up to 1,000 additional marines in the MSG program to provide the additional end strength and resources necessary to support enhanced Marine Corps security at United States embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic facilities.

118. In your view, should the current arrangements between the Department of State and U.S. Marine Corps be modified?

I understand that DoD has taken measures to expand the Marine Security Guard (MSG) Program, and has taken the additional step of creating the MSG Security Augmentation Unit, which may be used to provide additional security at diplomatic facilities as threats change. In 2013, the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) and the Department of State (DoS) signed a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Marine Security at DoS facilities. I understand that DoD and DOS are reviewing policies, programs, roles, and responsibilities -- including the MSG program -- to maximize the protection of our overseas diplomatic facilities and personnel, and would support this review if confirmed.

119. In your view, would it be beneficial to the security of diplomatic facilities, many of which house U.S. military personnel, to have appropriate DOD personnel to assist in the conduct of vulnerability assessments of such facilities?

Yes. To that end, the Department has directed its Geographic Combatant Commands (GCCs) to conduct planning and coordination with Chiefs of Mission at high-threat, high-risk posts identified by DoS. The GCCs are also directly engaged with the Chiefs of Mission to plan and coordinate response options. Likewise, GCC Security Assessment Teams have deployed to numerous high threat posts such as Baghdad and Sana’a to help Embassy staff with their security and evacuation planning. I would review these issues if confirmed and offer my best recommendation.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

120. What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to the United States?

Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) poses a significant terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests in the Middle East. Since 2009, AQAP has attempted at least three attacks on the United States, including through the use of sophisticated concealed explosive devices. Additionally, AQAP attack plotting led to the temporary closure of several U.S. embassies in the Middle East in August 2013.

121. What is your assessment of the current U.S. strategy to counter al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, specifically in Yemen?

Countering al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula should be a top priority for the U.S. government. The U.S. counterterrorism (CT) strategy in Yemen focuses on a mix of partnership activities and limited direct action against those who threaten the United States. The U.S. government, in partnership with its allies and the Yemeni government, have made a number of important gains against AQAP, including the removal of numerous AQAP leaders and the disruption of plotting against the United States, although AQAP remains resilient and we must maintain our vigilance in addressing this threat. If confirmed I intend to receive a detailed briefing to inform my assessment.

Yemen

122. What are U.S. national security interests in Yemen?

Our primary national security interest in Yemen is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and eliminate the ungoverned territory that AQAP or any hostile group may seek to exploit to threaten the United States, our regional interests, and those of our partners. We also have an interest in a stable government in Yemen, and support a responsible transition to an inclusive and capable government that helps achieve those objectives.

123. What is your assessment of U.S. strategy in Yemen to date?

I believe that although the U.S. government has helped the Yemeni government build the capabilities of its security forces, the political instability that has long plagued Yemen – particularly in recent weeks - hinders Yemen's ability to respond to the threat posed by AQAP.

124. What are the implications of recent events in Yemen for U.S. counterterrorism policy both in Yemen and globally?

Continued political turbulence in Yemen risks further hindering Yemeni efforts against AQAP and enabling AQAP to continue to plot attacks and recruit operatives in Yemen's ungoverned spaces. AQAP's claim of responsibility for the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris demonstrates that AQAP continues to pose a threat to the United States and its Allies and partners. The political situation in Yemen is difficult and fluid, and it remains to be seen how this will affect our relationship with the Yemeni government. Nevertheless, I believe the U.S. should continue to maintain pressure on AQAP by using all necessary means to eliminate terrorist threats to our national security.

North Africa

In recent years, there has been a growth of terrorist networks, capabilities, operations, and safe havens throughout North and East Africa, including groups that have the intention to target U.S. and Western interests. In the face of growing

instability and threats, the U.S. counterterrorism effort in the region has been described as an “economy of force” effort.

125. Do you agree with that characterization of the situation in North and East Africa and the U.S. counterterrorism efforts to combat the related threats?

I would characterize U.S. counterterrorism efforts in North and East Africa as working by, with, and through our allies and regional partners. In North Africa, the U.S. works with allies such as the French and regional partners such as Tunisia, Niger, and Chad. Specifically, DoD has supported their combined operations against groups such as al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitun. In East Africa, the U.S. has continued training, equipping, and enabling the AMISOM troop contributing countries in their efforts to stabilize Somalia and counter the threat posed by al-Shabaab.

126. What is your assessment of the current U.S. counterterrorism strategy in the region?

I understand the current U.S. strategy seeks to prevent and disrupt terrorist plots that threaten U.S. interests at home and abroad, while helping the Yemeni government build its own CT capabilities to combat AQAP over the long run. I am aware that the U.S. has removed several key AQAP operatives from the battlefield and disrupted AQAP plots. In 2012, Yemeni forces, with training and advisory support from the Department, succeeded in driving AQAP from large areas of Yemen. However, I believe the turbulent political situation in Yemen will complicate these efforts, and will require adapting the strategy to these changes.

127. In your view, is the U.S. military allocating adequate resources to effectively address the terrorism threat in the region?

In my view, given the counterterrorism challenges we face in numerous areas, U.S. military resources are adequately balanced to meet the many competing counterterrorism requirements in North and East Africa.

General Rodriguez noted in his March 2014 testimony that “North Africa is a significant source of foreign fighters in the current conflict in Syria.”

128. What is your understanding of the foreign fighter flow from North Africa to the conflict in Syria and Iraq?

I believe foreign fighters pose a threat to the U.S., and that this threat is exacerbated by the ongoing political and security instability in Libya. If confirmed, I will focus attention on the foreign fighter flow as the Department works with regional partners in North Africa to address the challenge posed by the terrorist safe haven in Libya and broader counterterrorism issues.

129. In your view, is it likely that many of these fighters will eventually return home from Syria and Iraq to North Africa and continue their fight against regional governments?

There is a real possibility that as we address the situation in Syria and Iraq, some of these fighters may choose to return home to North Africa. This could pose a serious challenge for our regional partners. These returning fighters will have the benefit of training and combat experience. It is therefore important that the United States continue its close collaboration on counterterrorism with our partners in North Africa so that they are prepared to respond in the event that the fighters decide to take up arms upon their return.

We must also work closely with the neighbors of Syria and Libya to build up their security capabilities to counter instability and the negative regional impact it could cause. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department of Defense supports the diplomatic efforts to secure a political solution in Libya, work closely with Libya's neighbors to ensure regional stability, and maintain an active and robust counterterrorism presence in the region.

Collaboration between the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community

Since September 11, 2001, collaboration – both analytical and operational – between the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community has grown increasingly close. On one hand, seamless collaboration is a vital component of effective and rapid responses to non-traditional threats, and bringing together the strengths of the full spectrum of defense and intelligence missions creates opportunities for solutions to complex problems. On the other hand, such collaboration – without effective management and oversight – risks blurring the missions of agencies and individuals that have cultivated distinct strengths or creating redundant lines of effort.

130. What are your views regarding the appropriate scope of collaboration between DOD and the Intelligence Community?

Collaboration between DoD and the Intelligence Community (IC) is an essential element for supporting our national security objectives. For example, DoD depends on capabilities provided by the IC to support weapons systems acquisition and to enable military operations. The IC depends on capabilities provided by DoD to support special forces. This collaboration is essential to make progress toward dismantling and strategically defeating al Qaeda, to counter the proliferation of WMD, to defend against space and cyber threats, and to operate in denied areas.

131. In your view, are there aspects of the current relationship between the Department and the Intelligence Community that should be re-examined or modified?

I am not aware of any specific areas requiring immediate modification, however, if confirmed, I will look for opportunities to build on the existing strong relationship.

Russia

Crimea was formally annexed when President Putin signed a bill to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation on March 18, 2014, and Russia continues to fuel instability in eastern Ukraine despite a ceasefire agreed to in September 2014.

132. How effective do you assess the sanctions of the U.S. and the European Union have been in deterring additional aggression by Russia?

U.S. and European Union sanctions, combined with declining oil prices, have significantly impacted the Russian economy and highlight the consequences of Russia's actions in Ukraine. Unfortunately, despite these costs, Russia has not abided by its commitments in the Minsk agreements and is continuing to foment instability in eastern Ukraine. If confirmed, I would work with U.S. departments and agencies to review and adjust our sanctions regime as appropriate.

133. In your opinion, what other specific actions has the U.S. taken that have helped to deter additional Russian aggression in Eastern Europe?

The United States has taken action, both bilaterally and within the NATO Alliance, with the goal of deterring additional Russian aggression and reassure European Allies. These include the establishment of the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which provides an enhanced rotational presence in Europe; support to U.S. allies and partners in the region; and increased training and exercises. If confirmed, I plan to take a close look at what additional actions we might take to deter Russia and impact Putin's calculus.

134. In your opinion, what steps have proven or are likely to prove most effective at deterring Russian aggression in Eastern Europe?

If confirmed, I would take a close look at what actions may have worked best, and what additional actions we might take, to deter Russia from aggression in Eastern Europe.

135. Do you believe that Moldova and Georgia are at a heightened state of vulnerability given Russian willingness to take aggressive action in Ukraine?

Yes. Russia has long fomented "frozen conflicts" in Moldova and Georgia in order to limit their freedom of action and hinder their Euro-Atlantic ambitions. Following Russia's actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have increased their efforts to deepen cooperation with the United States and NATO.

Russian tactics in eastern Ukraine have been called "hybrid" and combine hard power with soft power, including elements such as lethal security assistance to separatists, the use of special forces, extensive information operations, withholding energy supplies and economic pressure.

136. If confirmed, what elements should make up the strategy you would recommend to counter this “hybrid” approach?

Through the European Reassurance Initiative and the NATO Readiness Action Plan, the United States is supporting our Allies and partners in Eastern Europe with training activities, rotational presence, and capacity-building programs. These efforts focus on making our Allies and partners more resistant to asymmetric threats; demonstrating U.S. resolve to support European and global security; and deterring Russian aggression. If confirmed, I would seek opportunities to support and work with our Allies and partners in creating more activities, training, and exchanges that build their resistance to asymmetric, or hybrid, methods of coercion.

137. In light of Russia’s actions in 2014, what do you believe are appropriate objectives for U.S.-Russian security relations?

As I understand the situation, the Department of Defense suspended military cooperation with Russia as a result of its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea. Russia’s behavior is inconsistent with that of a responsible, global stakeholder, and I support this response. If confirmed, I would be open to seeking measured avenues that allow more productive engagement with Russia, but only on issues where we have a clear national interest.

NATO Alliance

The reemergence of an aggressive Russia has resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) developing the Readiness Action Plan that NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called “the biggest reinforcement of our collective defense since the end of the Cold War.” NATO also continues to be central to our coalition operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, even as many NATO members have significantly reduced their national defense budgets in response to economic and fiscal pressures.

138. In your view, particularly in light of the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine, what are the major strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years?

The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend its territory and populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. The best way to protect our populations and territories is to cooperate with Alliance partners to deter challenges to our security from emerging; to effectively manage challenges when they do emerge; and to be prepared to mount a strong defense if deterrence fails. When Allies feel threatened – as many do as a result of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine – it is important for the Alliance to carry out the necessary training, exercises, and planning and to provide visible reassurance to vulnerable Allies in order to reinforce confidence in Article 5 and sustain Alliance solidarity. NATO must also remain prepared to undertake its other “core

tasks” of crisis management and cooperative security, drawing on its unique political and military capabilities to prevent and respond to crises and to work with partners and other international organizations to address threats that emanate from outside Alliance territory.

139. What are the greatest opportunities and challenges that you foresee for NATO in meeting its strategic objectives over the next five years?

NATO's greatest opportunities lie in how it deals with the expanding range of challenges it will face over the next five years. While I cannot predict all the challenges the Alliance will face, NATO's ability to respond effectively and with resolve against Russia's aggression; to counter non-state actors that threaten the Alliance and its periphery, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; and to manage the transition in Afghanistan will be critical over the next five years. Managing these myriad challenges will require the political will, solidarity, and adequate defense investment to fulfill the vision of the Wales Summit. Ensuring that happens will be NATO's greatest challenge over the next five years.

140. In light of the reductions in national defense spending by some NATO members, are you concerned that the Alliance will lack critical military capabilities? If so, what steps, if any, would you recommend be taken to address potential shortfalls in Alliance capabilities?

The United States should be concerned about continued reductions in defense investment by our Allies, particularly the NATO Allies that have been our most reliable partners for managing global security issues. These capabilities can be costly, but we need to ensure that in the future the United States is not the only Ally with such capabilities. That means holding Allies to the Defense Investment Pledge they agreed to at the Wales Summit and working with Allies on defense planning to ensure they maintain the specific capabilities that are needed.

141. What do you see as the proper role, if any, for NATO in addressing the threat posed by ISIL and in addressing the problem of illegal immigration across the Mediterranean Sea?

NATO nations have a vested interest in defeating ISIL, both to promote stability in the Middle East and to eliminate the threat posed by ISIL to NATO nations and partners. If confirmed I would work with NATO Allies to appropriately scope our collective efforts. To date, NATO nations have committed forces to counter ISIL under unilateral and multilateral efforts. On illegal Mediterranean immigration, NATO should continue its efforts to share information gained through maritime situational awareness operations. If Allies agree, NATO could also help address regional security crises and instability, or humanitarian crises, which are often associated with displaced populations and flows of refugees.

The concept of defense cooperation between NATO members was emphasized at the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.

142. What areas or projects would you recommend, if confirmed, that NATO nations cooperate in to improve NATO alliance capabilities?

Cooperation among Allies on capabilities is increasingly important in light of the worldwide challenges and the fiscal straits facing Allied nations. If confirmed, I would work to ensure Allies honor their recent Summit pledge to move toward the two percent defense spending target, which also called for focusing those resources on specific Alliance capability needs, such as command and control and joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

143. Under what conditions, if any, would you envision further enlargement of NATO in the coming years?

The door to Alliance membership remains open to those European nations deemed ready for membership by the 28 Allies. The United States and our Allies, through Partnership for Peace and other Partner programs, work with candidates to help prepare for membership, such as through improving military capabilities and interoperability. If confirmed, I would ensure the Department of Defense is working both at NATO and bilaterally to ready candidates to be considered for membership.

144. In your view, is there a continuing requirement for U.S. nuclear weapons to be deployed in NATO countries?

NATO will remain a nuclear Alliance for as long as nuclear weapons exist. The Alliance's nuclear force is an effective deterrent. Allies reaffirmed this stance at the Wales Summit last September, and I support the conviction that NATO must maintain the full range of capabilities necessary to maintain Alliance security, based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities.

Turkey continues to be a gateway for foreign fighters proceeding to and from Syria and Iraq.

145. What steps would you recommend, if confirmed, to encourage Turkey to address this threat?

The threat posed to the U.S. and the West by foreign fighters moving in and out of Syria -- many of whom transit through Turkey -- remains a concern. If confirmed, I would continue to support U.S. interagency efforts to assist Turkey in disrupting this threat -- including strengthening the Department's partnership on this issue with the Turkish military -- as well as to assist the source countries for foreign fighters around the world in doing more to identify and halt potential violent extremists before they travel.

Kosovo

Approximately 700 U.S. troops remain in the Balkans as part of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) that first deployed to Kosovo in 1999 and today is comprised of over 4,600 personnel from 30 countries. Spikes in violence in 2011 required the deployment

of the NATO Operational Reserve Force battalion of approximately 600 soldiers to bolster KFOR and maintain a secure environment. Progress is required in both the military and political realms before further troop reductions can be made.

146. What major lines of effort do you think are required to further reduce or eliminate U.S. and NATO presence in Kosovo?

The key line of effort that will define U.S. and NATO presence in Kosovo is the continued normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, under the EU facilitated dialogue that led to a normalization agreement in April 2013. A further line of effort is the transition of the Kosovo Security Forces into a Kosovo Armed Force that integrates the various ethnic communities of Kosovo and contributes to the strength of national governing institutions.

147. In your view, can the European Union play a more significant role in Kosovo?

The EU plays a significant role in Kosovo as one of the three major guarantors of Kosovo's peace and stability, along with the Kosovo national police and NATO's Kosovo Force. The EU-facilitated political dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, along with the reforms and concessions the EU requires of Serbia as it seeks EU membership, are major factors contributing to the normalization process between Kosovo and Serbia. This active engagement by the EU has been an essential part of the progress made to date.

Special Operations Forces

The 2006 and 2010 Quadrennial Defense Reviews mandated significant growth in our special operations forces (SOF) and enablers that directly support their operations. The most recent QDR released in 2014 QDR capped this growth at 69,500, approximately 2,500 below the original planned growth.

148. In light of the increase in terrorist threats worldwide, do you believe the revised end-strength for special operations forces is sufficient to address such threats?

Since 2001, the Department has continuously examined the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) force structure to ensure that there are adequate SOF capabilities and capacities to meet the worldwide terrorist threat. The Department has invested in SOF readiness and modernization efforts to meet emerging requirements and to address the needs of the future security environment. If confirmed, I would work closely with my interagency counterparts to develop options for the best use of these capabilities and with those responsible in the department to examine this issue further.

Special operations forces are heavily reliant on enabling support from the general purpose force.

149. In light of current fiscal challenges, do you believe sufficient enabling capabilities can be maintained within the general purpose forces and that such capabilities will remain available to special operations forces?

I believe that it is important for our Special Operations Forces to receive excellent support from the Services. If confirmed, I would work closely with those responsible in the Department to ensure the Department achieves an appropriate balance.

Combating Terrorism

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

Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents continue to pose a significant threat to the U.S., its interests, and the interests of our key Western allies. The recent attacks in Paris, which have been linked to al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) demonstrates this fact.

151. What is your understanding of the Department's role in the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism?

The Department of Defense has a two-fold role in carrying out the President's guidance contained in the 2011 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. First, the Department's principal function in support of this strategy is to work with key partners around the globe to build their own capacity to take action against terrorist groups and networks both internally and within their particular regions. Capacity building efforts are part of a broad multi-departmental and multi-agency effort in support of the strategy's long-term goal to advance effective democracies. Second, the Department actively works to prevent terrorist network attacks by collecting and sharing intelligence with key partners, conducting information operations, and, when appropriate, conducting U.S. operations to capture or kill terrorists who pose a continuing, imminent threat to U.S. persons.

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

In the decade following the events of 9/11, the U.S. government learned many lessons relating to the value of active cooperation and sharing among the various departments and agencies. The Department of Defense has internalized many of these lessons as part of our institutional culture; it routinely coordinates and collaborates with other federal departments and agencies to combat terrorist networks and threats to U.S. interests. Success in today's complex threat environment requires an interagency approach.

153. In your opinion, how does the fighting between ISIL and al Qaeda for preeminence among terrorist organizations alter the nature or scope of the global security threat as it relates to violent extremists? What elements of our strategy best take advantage of the infighting between major terrorist groups?

The fighting between ISIL and al Qaeda for preeminence of the global jihadist movement does not significantly alter the scope of the threat posed to the homeland, our overseas bases, and our deployed personnel. We must remain vigilant against all threats to the U.S. homeland, overseas infrastructure, and interests, and we must remain flexible to meet the threat posed by either ISIL or al Qaeda, and potentially other violent groups as necessary. However, there exists the potential that competition between the groups could escalate the threat we face, as each group increases external plotting efforts in an attempt to bolster their credentials within the global jihadist movement.

As opportunities may emerge for the U.S. to further disrupt their activities. I would direct the Department to monitor these opportunities and recommend steps to address them as needed.

Section 1208 Operations

Section 1208 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Public Law 108-375), as amended by subsequent bills, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations by U.S. Special Operations Forces to combat terrorism.

154. What is your assessment of this authority?

It is my understanding that Section 1208 authority is an effective tool to support U.S. Special Operations Forces conducting counterterrorism operations. If confirmed, I would look for ways to maximize our return on the investments we are able to make in support of partner forces under Section 1208 authority.

Mass Atrocities Prevention

President Obama identified the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide as a core U.S. national security interest, as well as a core moral interest, in August 2011 under Presidential Study Directive 10.

155. What are your views on the role the United States plays in the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide?

The United States can help prevent mass atrocities and genocide worldwide. That role is consistent with our values, and is in our national security interest. The military has unique capabilities to counter atrocities; in a recent example, U.S. air strikes helped protect Yezidi

refugees on Mount Sinjar in Iraq. There is more to atrocity prevention than use of military force, however. For example, adequate warning mechanisms and international pressure, including sanctions, can also help prevent atrocities and genocide.

156. What are your views on the adequacy of the Department's tools and doctrine for contributing to this role?

I believe the Department has effective tools and doctrine to help deter both mass atrocities and genocide. These tools include providing humanitarian assistance and helping secure territory to protect civilians. If confirmed, I would continue to look for ways to enhance the tools and doctrine available to us in preventing mass atrocities and genocide.

U.S. Force Posture in the Asia Pacific Region

The Defense Department's January 2012 strategic guidance, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century", states that "while the U.S. military will continue to contribute to security globally, *we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region.*" Likewise, the 2010 report of the Quadrennial Defense Review states that the United States needs to "sustain and strengthen our Asia-Pacific alliances and partnerships to advance mutual security interests and ensure sustainable peace and security in the region," and that, to accomplish this, DOD "will augment and adapt our forward presence" in the Asia-Pacific region.

157. What does the "rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region" mean to you in terms of force structure, capabilities and funding?

The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, as announced by the President, incorporated in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, and reinforced by the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review, has resulted in a significant rebalancing of U.S. force structure and capabilities to this region, commensurate with its vital importance to U.S. security interests and global peace and prosperity. As we plan for the future, we will need to prioritize investments in advanced capabilities that are critical for the future operational environment. If confirmed, I will continue to support the ongoing efforts to increase DoD presence in the region and invest in and deploy critical advanced capabilities.

158. If sequestration cuts move forward as planned beginning in Fiscal Year 2016, do you feel the Department of Defense has adequate resources to implement the January 2012 strategic guidance?

If we return to sequestration-level cuts in Fiscal Year 2016, we will face significant risks across the board, and may have to reassess the defense strategy. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to help solve this pressing problem.

159. What do you see as the U.S. security priorities in the Asia-Pacific region?

First and foremost, we must work tirelessly to protect security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, which is vital to the prosperity of all Pacific nations, including the United States. The United States faces a range of challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, including provocations by the DPRK and the growth of its ballistic missile programs, the emergence of new technologies intended to prevent open access to the air and maritime domain, widespread natural disasters and transnational threats, and territorial disputes.

To address these challenges, I believe the Department must continue to modernize U.S. alliances and partnerships, which provide a critical role in underwriting regional security. The Department should also continue to strengthen our ability to deter threats to the U.S. homeland and our allies and citizens overseas, enhance U.S. force posture and capabilities in the region, work with China to encourage greater transparency about how it will use its growing military capabilities; and encourage the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes in accordance with international law.

160. Do you believe that it is a "necessity" to rebalance the U.S. military toward the Asia-Pacific region? If so, why?

Yes. The United States has been - and always will be - a Pacific nation, due to both our geography and our critical interests in the region. The Asia-Pacific region is home to over half of the world's population, half of the world's GDP, and nearly half of the world's trade. It is also home to some of the world's fastest growing economies and largest democracies.

The U.S. military presence has played a vital role in undergirding peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region for over sixty years. Our presence deters potential adversaries; protects core principles, such as freedom of the seas and the peaceful resolution of conflicts; and reassures key allies and partners. I believe this presence is critical to the continued security of the region and the future prosperity of the United States and our allies and partners.

161. Do continuing operations in the Middle East hamper this pivot?

It is important to continue to advance the force structure changes, new forces station plans, improvements in advanced weapon systems, and other measures that make up the military aspects of the rebalance, as well as to continue the political and economic aspects, even as U.S. forces respond to other global contingencies.

162. Why, if at all, do you believe it is important for the U.S. military to maintain and even augment its forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and what are the advantages to having a forward presence?

It is critical for the US military to evolve its forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region to respond to the changing strategic environment. If confirmed, I will continue ongoing efforts to achieve a more geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically

sustainable force posture in the Asia-Pacific in order to reassure allies and partners and deter aggressive acts by adversaries. I believe that improving access and presence enables building regional partner capacity that is a force multiplier for U.S. military forces in the event of a contingency or humanitarian crisis in the region.

Secretary Hagel has said that the Army could “broaden its role,” after more than a decade of continuous operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, “by leveraging its current suite of long-range precision-guided missiles, rockets, artillery and air defense systems” to build a modern coastal defense force that could contribute to operations in anti-access/area-denial environments.

163. Do you concur that U.S. defense policy would be served if the Army were to adopt such a mission? What do you see as possible obstacles to the Army taking on such a mission?

If confirmed, I would support Army's ongoing efforts to improve its integrated air and missile defense capabilities. In the coming years, the drawdown in Afghanistan will allow the Army to focus on resetting, to look forward to new missions, and to invest in innovative technologies and concepts of operations that will contribute to the resiliency of the joint force.

164. Are you confident the Guam Distributed Laydown Plan can be executed at the cost estimate and under the political assumptions previously presented by the Department?

The joint force is developing Guam into a strategic hub for the region. Following the submission of the Guam Master Plan to Congress in July 2014, execution of the Guam program is moving forward. I understand that the new plan is comprehensive, but I am not fully briefed on the updated details at this time. If confirmed, I will direct that efforts continue within the Department to scrutinize costs and program execution, as well as to engage with my Japanese counterparts on their continued contributions.

165. Do you see value in the Department conducting another East Asia Strategy Report, as was last done in the late 1990s?

Yes, I believe it is in the Department's interest to clearly articulate our priorities and security objectives in this vital region of the world. The report required Section 1251 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 provides the Department with the opportunity to address these issues.

166. Do you see a need for enhanced US security engagement in the Indian Ocean, and if so, in what areas and with whom?

Yes. The Indian Ocean is one of the world's busiest trade corridors and the United States and our regional partners have a shared interest in ensuring safe and secure access to its maritime routes. As Asian economic growth continues to increase traffic in the Indian Ocean, it will

increase the potential for threats in the region, including piracy, extremist attacks, or illegal trafficking. The United States has a strong interest in working with long-time allies and partners such as India and Australia to combat these threats, while also increasing security assistance and military-to-military engagement with other strategically positioned states such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

China

167: From your perspective, what effect is China's expanding economy and growing military having on the region at-large and how does that growth influence the U.S. security posture in the Asia-Pacific region?

China's economic growth can be a positive force in the Asia-Pacific region, and the United States and many countries in the region welcome China's economic rise. However, China's increasing military might, in the absence of greater transparency from China, is causing rising concern throughout the region and must be closely watched. China's military expenditures continue to grow annually at double-digit rates even as China asserts territorial and maritime claims in ways contrary to international norms. These developments are spurring other Asia-Pacific countries to modernize their militaries and causing increased demand in the region for security cooperation with the United States.

The U.S. should continually evaluate our force posture and capabilities in order to sustain peace and stability in the region. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States remains the preeminent military power in the Asia-Pacific region in order to sustain the conditions that have fostered peace and prosperity.

168. As China continues to invest in capabilities designed to deter or deny U.S. military forces seeking to operate in the Western Pacific, are you confident that the United States is investing in the right programs, posture, and operational concepts to sustain a favorable military balance with China?

It is necessary for the U.S. to continue to monitor closely trends in Chinese military modernization, strategy, doctrine, and training, and in concert with allies and partners, to adapt investment programs, posture, and operational concepts to maintain a stable and secure Asia-Pacific security environment and a favorable military balance with China.

169. What can the U.S. do, both unilaterally and in coordination with allies and partners, to counter the increasing challenge posed by China in the East and South China Seas?

As a Pacific nation, the United States has a vested interest in maintaining peace and stability, the free flow of commerce, and freedom of navigation and overflight in the East and South China Seas. U.S. security presence, including our strong alliances and partnerships, as well as our force posture and capabilities, have protected these interests and helped maintain maritime stability for more than sixty years.

The U.S. must continue to encourage China to clarify its claims in the South China Sea in accordance with international law. We should also reaffirm our strong commitment to our allies and partners and the need for all parties to develop confidence-building measures that will increase transparency and reduce risk.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the United States sustains its ability to deter aggression and coercion and maintain free and open access to the maritime domain in the Asia-Pacific region. To this end, I will continue the Department's efforts to modernize U.S. security alliances and partnerships, enhance U.S. force posture, and update our military capabilities.

U.S-China military-to-military dialogue has been strained over the past several years and efforts to establish and maintain mutually beneficial military relations has been hampered by China's propensity for postponing or canceling military engagements in an apparent effort to influence U.S. actions, although there is some evidence that the relationship is improving.

170: What is your view of the purpose and relative importance of sustained military-to-military relations with China?

It is profoundly in the United States' and China's interests that we find ways in the overall relationship, as well as in the military-to-military relationship, to increase cooperation where our interests overlap and to manage our differences where we disagree. In recent years, the Department's sustained and substantive dialogue with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has enabled both the United States and China to reduce the risk of misperception and miscalculation, as well as to deepen practical cooperation in areas ranging from humanitarian assistance to military medicine. In addition to making investments that ensure our technological advantages in all domains, the military-to-military relationship is an important component in managing competition.

I believe we should continue to use our military engagement with China to establish deeper cooperation where there is clear, mutual benefit and to enhance dialogues to reduce risk and manage our differences. As the Department continues to develop the military-to-military relationship with China, it will be important to also adapt forces, posture, and operational concepts in cooperation with our allies and partners to maintain a stable and secure Asia-Pacific region.

171: Do you believe that we should make any changes in the quality or quantity of our military relations with China? If so, what changes would you suggest and, given Chinese resistance to military-to-military dialogue, how would you implement them?

If confirmed, I would seek to strengthen the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship in ways that best serve the interests of the United States and our allies and partners. Military-to-military ties are beginning to demonstrate positive outcomes. China is devoting more attention to operational safety and preventing incidents that could seriously harm the overall

relationship. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue a sustained, substantive dialogue that aims to reduce risk and manage our differences, while building concrete, practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

North Korea

172. What is your assessment of the current security situation on the Korean peninsula?

The US - ROK alliance continues to be the critical linchpin to deterring North Korean aggression and maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea remains one of the most intractable security problems for the United States and our allies and partners in the region. North Korea continues to take actions that are destabilizing for the region, including its December 2012 missile launch, February 2013 nuclear test, series of short-range ballistic missile launches in 2014, and its recent cyber-attack against Sony Pictures Entertainment.

The limited information we have on Kim Jong Un, his regime, and North Korea's motivations also add to my concern. Despite the recent signals from both North and South Korea about openness to inter-Korean engagement, the U.S. should remain vigilant against the strong possibility that North Korea will use brinkmanship and provocations to try to coerce the United States and its allies and partners back into negotiations on its own terms. If confirmed, I will ensure that the U.S.-ROK Alliance continues to strengthen alliance capabilities to counter North Korea's increasing missile and nuclear threat.

173. What is your assessment of the threat posed to the United States and its allies by North Korea's ballistic missile and WMD capabilities and the export of those capabilities?

North Korea's ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities clearly present a serious and direct threat to U.S. forces postured in the Asia-Pacific region as well as to our regional allies and partners. These capabilities, although untested at longer ranges, could also pose a direct threat to the United States. Moreover, North Korea's history of proliferation activities amplify the dangers of its asymmetric programs.

If confirmed, I will ensure that we draw upon the full range of our capabilities to protect against, and to respond to, these threats.

174. In your view, what additional steps should the United States take to defend against the North Korean ballistic missile threat and dissuade North Korea from its continued pursuit of ballistic missile technology and to stop or slow North Korean proliferation of missile and weapons technology to Syria, Iran and others?

If confirmed, I will continue efforts to strengthen our strong defense posture against the North Korean ballistic missile threat. This includes supporting our current efforts to increase the number of ground-based interceptors in California and Alaska, enhancing DoD's ability

to highlight and disrupt the illicit proliferation networks that North Korea uses, and promoting cooperation with partners to interdict vessels and aircraft suspected of transporting items of proliferation concern.

175. What is your view on Kim Jong Un’s proposal to cease future nuclear tests in exchange for the U.S. cancelling annual military exercises in 2015 with South Korea?

I believe the U.S. annual combined exercises with the Republic of Korea, including KEY RESOLVE and FOAL EAGLE during the first part of 2015 and ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN during the summer of 2015, are routine, transparent, and defensive exercises that are meant to strengthen military readiness and Alliance preparedness. There is no equivalence between conducting these exercises and North Korean nuclear tests, which are violations of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

India

176. What is your view of the current state of the U.S.-India security relations?

India and the United States have built a strong strategic partnership. India is an important net provider of security in the region, and a partner on issues ranging from maritime security to humanitarian assistance to broader regional stability. The past decade has been transformative in the U.S.-India relationship, and we are seeing greater convergence in our interests and concerns than ever before, particularly between our rebalance to Asia and India’s “Act East.” Strengthening the U.S.-India defense relationship was a priority for me as Deputy Secretary of Defense and, if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize the steady growth of this relationship.

Defense plays a vital role in U.S-India relations, which includes a robust series of military exchanges and exercises, a strong track record on defense trade, and increasingly close consultations on regional security issues. The Department of Defense also remains committed to technological cooperation with India through the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), under which the President announced four pathfinder projects, a working group on aircraft carrier cooperation, and the possibility of cooperating on jet engine technology. As Deputy Secretary of Defense, I launched DTTI, now led by Under Secretary Frank Kendall. If confirmed, I will lean-forward to expand DTTI with additional co-production and co-development activities.

177. If confirmed, what specific priorities would you establish for this relationship?

If confirmed, I will continue to find ways to strengthen our military-to-military relationship by expanding the scope and complexity of our exercises, and ensure the consistency of our engagement. I will prioritize exchanges at all levels of our military, and encourage frequent high-level visits. I will also build upon the progress achieved under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). This includes pursuing additional opportunities for co-production/co-development projects, developing the defense trade relationship into

increasingly sophisticated areas, and encouraging broader defense S&T engagement with India. Finally, I will continue to look for ways to expand upon our maritime security relationship and identify specific areas for increased cooperation, including in the Asia-Pacific.

178. What is your assessment of the relationship between India and China and how does that relationship impact the security and stability of the region?

As with the United States and China, India's relationship with China displays both cooperative and competitive aspects. It is hampered by a trust deficit stemming from China's long-time, close relations with Pakistan; a long-time border dispute; and on-going competition for resources. Efforts to mitigate this mistrust are further complicated by a growing competition for influence in the South and Southeast Asian regions, a trade imbalance in China's favor, and recent Chinese naval activity in the Indian Ocean region.

Despite these factors, the two countries often find common ground in international groupings, such as the BRICS and G20, due to shared interests and a desire to shape the international system to ensure their respective domestic development and economic growth. This cooperation helps to maintain stability in Sino-Indian ties and preclude more overt security competition. The United States, India, and China all have an important role in ensuring the peace and stability of the region and a rules-based order.

Department of Defense Counternarcotics Activities

DOD serves as the single lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime foreign shipments of drugs flowing toward the U.S. On an annual basis, DOD's counter narcotics (CN) program expends nearly \$1 billion to support the Department's CN operations, including building the capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and certain foreign governments, and providing intelligence support on CN-related matters and a variety of other unique enabling capabilities.

179. In your view, what is the appropriate role of DOD in counterdrug efforts?

DoD should continue to play an important role in identifying counter narcotics networks and supporting the interdiction of illicit drugs entering the United States. In addition, DoD should continue to support U.S. law enforcement and partner nations' enforcement capabilities by facilitating training, providing equipment, and improving infrastructure that strengthens their operational reach and their own sustainment capabilities.

180. Do you believe that the U.S. broadly, and the U.S. military more narrowly, has been effective in achieving its counterdrug objectives?

The U.S. has supported the interdiction of hundreds of tons of illegal drugs by law

enforcement personnel annually. The U.S. has also, through multi-agency efforts, put pressure on major drug trafficking organizations and their leaders. The Department's efforts to build the counter narcotics capacity of partner nations' security forces also contribute to counterdrug objectives by strengthening security institutions and by equipping and training security personnel to disrupt, degrade, and deter drug trafficking networks in both source and transit countries.

181. In your view, what should be the role of the United States in countering the flow of narcotics to nations other than the U.S.?

I believe that the United States, along with other countries, should continue to assist other nations in the fight against drug trafficking by supporting efforts to enhance the capacity of these nations to disrupt and degrade narcotics trafficking networks.

National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime

Transnational criminal organizations are having a debilitating impact on the ability of our foreign partners to govern their nations and provide opportunities for their people. The Department of Defense is by no means the U.S. Government's law enforcement agency, but it does bring unique enabling capabilities to our nation's Federal law enforcement agencies. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 expanded several of the Department's primary counterdrug authorities to include "countering transnational organized crime" as an approved activity to reflect the increasingly diverse nature of these illicit, global networks.

182. What is your understanding of the President's strategy to combat transnational criminal organizations?

The President's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime recognizes that transnational organized crime (TOC) has expanded in size, scope, and influence over the past 20 years, and now poses a significant and direct threat to national and international security. The Strategy, with amplifying implementation guidance, calls for combatting networks that pose a strategic threat to U.S. interests, and ultimately aims to reduce TOC networks from a national security threat to a manageable public safety problem.

183. What role, if any, should the Department play in combatting transnational criminal organizations?

The President's Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime declares transnational organized crime (TOC) a threat to national security, and calls on the U.S. Government to build, balance, and integrate the tools of national power to combat TOC and related threats. Although DoD does not serve as the lead for combatting TOC, it can provide unique and critical support to U.S. law enforcement efforts. Specific DoD capabilities include military intelligence support and counter-threat finance support, training of foreign partners, and detection and monitoring. The expanded authorities provided by Congress in the National

Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 provide additional opportunities for DoD to support efforts to counter illicit networks and to contribute further to the achievement of U.S. Government objectives.

Counter Threat Finance

DOD and the Intelligence Community (IC) have begun investing more resources in identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with terrorist networks and illicit trafficking, but the opportunities for tracking and degrading illicit financing flows are not yet matched by the effort and resources devoted to them. Identifying and disrupting key individuals, entities, and facilitation routes enabling the flow of money that supports terrorism, production of IEDs, narco-trafficking, proliferation, and other significant national security threats could have an outsized impact on confronting these threats.

184. What are your views on the role of DOD in counter threat finance activities?

Terrorists, drug traffickers, and other adversaries rely heavily on licit and illicit funding sources to support their activities. I believe it is essential to engage all available tools to track and halt the flow of money and to fight our adversaries' ability to access and use global financial networks. Although DoD is not the lead agency for Counter-Threat Finance (CTF), CTF can be important to achieving DoD goals. I am aware that the Department works with other departments, agencies, and partner nations to provide planning, network analysis, and intelligence analysis.

185. Are you aware of any policy, legal authority, or resource shortfalls that may impair U.S. counter threat finance efforts?

I understand that the Department has concerns that we do not have enough fidelity on the sources of corruption that can impact our ability to achieve our goals in partner nations and, in non-terrorism cases, there are still difficulties fully sharing relevant information between law enforcement and intelligence entities.

186. In your view, how should the Department of Defense coordinate and interface with other key agencies, including the Department of Treasury and the Intelligence Community, in conducting counter threat finance activities?

I am aware that DoD works with other U.S. Government departments and agencies, including the Department of the Treasury and the Intelligence Community, on counter-threat finance efforts to limit our adversaries' ability to use global financial networks.

Central America and Mexico

During a March 13, 2014, Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, General John Kelly, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, stated that the “unprecedented expansion of criminal networks and violent gangs is impacting citizen security and stability in the region” which has led the United Nations to characterize Latin America “the most unequal and insecure region in the world.” Despite this reality and the region’s proximity to the U.S. Homeland, DOD efforts in the region have routinely been plagued by resource shortfalls, which have only been exacerbated by sequestration. To this point, General Kelly stated before the committee: “the severe budget cuts are now reversing the progress and forcing us to accept significant risks. Because of asset shortfalls, we’re unable to get after 74 percent of suspected maritime drug trafficking. I simply sit and watch it go by.” General Kelly went on to state that “the cumulative impact of our reduced engagement won’t be measured in the number of canceled activities and reduced deployments, it will be measured in terms of U.S. influence, leadership, relationships in a part of the world where our engagement has made a real and lasting difference over the decades.”

187. Do you share General Kelly’s concerns about the impact of DOD resource shortfalls to our operations and security interests in the region?

Yes.

188. What are your views on the threats posed by transnational criminal organizations in this region and their impact on U.S. security interests?

Transnational criminal organizations have become entrenched in places like the Northern Triangle of Central America, where they take advantage of weak government institutions, endemic corruption, large under-governed spaces, and the lack of viable economic opportunities. Many of our partners in the region are challenged to control the influence of transnational criminal organizations, which present a real threat to stability and expose vulnerabilities to the southern approaches to the United States.

189. What is your assessment of DOD’s role and current activities in Mexico and Central America?

The Department of Defense supports the broader U.S. interagency effort to promote security and stability in the region. The Department’s security cooperation activities in Central America focus on professionalization, respect for human rights, building capacity of local security forces, including maritime, and facilitating internal defense institutional reform efforts that will help those governments plan, resource, and maintain enhanced capabilities. The Department contributes to efforts to help Mexico address internal and transnational security challenges, as well as to support Mexico’s growing regional and international defense leadership role.

190. What changes, if any, would you propose to DOD’s current role and activities in this

region?

If confirmed, I would direct my team to examine whether there is more DoD could do to support U.S. strategies to address the root causes of insecurity in the region. Steps the U.S. government can take include supporting efforts to strengthen government institutions and fight corruption, develop infrastructure, address control of under-governed spaces and help diminish criminal organizations. Lasting solutions will require an interagency approach by the United States and will require the United States to cooperate and coordinate with other partners in the region.

Cuba

On December 17, 2014, President Obama announced changes in the diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Cuba which includes the easing of several longstanding restrictions.

191. Would you recommend the establishment of military-to-military engagement between the U.S. and Cuba? If so, what, if any, prerequisites should there to their establishment?

I believe that with the recent efforts to begin normalizing relations with Cuba there is an opportunity to consider carefully whether to expand defense relations. If confirmed, I would examine this issue carefully and work to ensure any military-to-military engagement is nested within a larger, comprehensive U.S. government engagement strategy.

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.

192. What do you believe are the most important lessons learned from the collaborative interagency efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere?

It is critical to draw lessons learned from Afghanistan and Iraq. A key lesson is that strategy requires a close integration of military, economic, intelligence, and diplomatic elements and the full range of American power. Increased collaboration, transparency, and communications among the interagency are important. If confirmed, I will focus on maintaining and improving these relationships to ensure that interagency collaboration is as effective as possible.

193. How do you believe these efforts can be improved?

Given the complexity and scope of the national security challenges we face, a whole-of-government approach is essential to our success in order to harness the full capabilities of all

U.S. departments and agencies. We must work with interagency partners to evaluate continually the effectiveness of our coordinated efforts and make adjustments where necessary. We must also acknowledge that every tool is not appropriate for every task.

194. How can the lessons learned in recent years be captured in military doctrine and adopted as "best practices" for future contingency operations?

We must have a rigorous approach to capturing our lessons learned and including them in our professional military education system and doctrine review process. If confirmed, I would keep these principles in mind as I work with the Military Departments and the Combatant Commands to maintain and cultivate enduring and agile partnerships with key departments and agencies across government.

Strategic Reviews

What is your understanding and assessment of the DOD processes for analysis, decision making, and reporting results for each of the following strategic reviews:

195. The Defense Strategy Review (section 118 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by Public Law 113-291);

The purpose of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is to articulate the Nation's defense strategy in support of the President's National Security Strategy. The Department of Defense is tasked, per Title 10 U.S.C. Section 118, with conducting a comprehensive examination of the national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies with a view toward establishing a defense program for the next 20 years. In my experience, effective QDRs incorporate inputs from various stakeholders, both within and outside the Department, and provide effective guidance to develop U.S. military force structure, plans, and programs.

196. The National Military Strategy (section 153 of title 10, United States Code);

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff prepares the National Military Strategy (NMS) in order to assist the President and Secretary with unified strategic direction of the Armed Forces. The Chairman uses a robust Joint Strategic Planning System to develop the NMS and biennially submits the strategy to the Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate. The strategy specifies military objectives, strategic and operational missions required to achieve those objectives, and the necessary capabilities to carry out each mission. The NMS also describes the strategic and operational risks associated with accomplishing the strategy.

197. Global Defense Posture Review (section 2687a of title 10, United States Code); and

The Global Defense Posture annual report to Congress, authored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in coordination with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, offers an operational view

of the Department's military personnel and facilities, and assesses changes to overseas posture required to meet evolving security environment and strategic priorities outlined in documents such as the QDR. DoD global posture decision-making processes continually review the appropriate mix of deployed and forward stationed U.S. forces, the distribution of enduring locations, and status of international agreements to meet national security requirements. If confirmed, I will ensure this thorough process continues to meet the Congressional intent.

198. If confirmed, what recommendations would you make, if any, to change title 10, United States Code, and to improve DOD's processes for analysis, policy formulation, and decision making relative to each review above?

I have no specific recommendations at this time. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Members of Congress to ensure that these reviews continue serving the needs of both Department of Defense leaders and the Congress.

Tactical Fighter Programs

199. Based on the current defense strategy, defense planning scenarios, and force-sizing construct, what are your views on the ability of the Department to meet combatant commander requirements with regard to fighter force capability and capacity now and into the future?

U.S. fighter forces currently enjoy technical superiority and will continue to contribute to the overall success of our forces. Other nations are making significant investments in modernizing their fighter fleets and in building advanced air defenses. The U.S. must maintain the ability to control the air space in any current and future operations.

The largest and most costly modernization effort we will face over the next several years is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program to upgrade our tactical aviation forces to fifth generation technologies.

200. Based on current and projected threats, what are your views on the continued requirement for and timing of this program?

While the F-35 program has experienced a number of program delays and other significant acquisition issues, when fielded it will provide a significant edge in the number of high capability aircraft. The 5th generation technology that is the backbone of this system will be required for success in future conflicts.

201. What is your assessment of whether the restructuring of the JSF program that we have seen over the past several years will be sufficient to avoid having to make major future adjustments in either cost or schedule?

The restructuring initiated in 2010 put the F-35 program on better footing. However, a program of this scope and importance requires continued aggressive management attention.

202. Are there any initiatives you would propose to help reduce operating and support costs for the JSF program?

There are many factors that drive the operating and support costs for a weapons system like the F-35. Aggressive management of these initiatives will be required because the operating and support costs will be a major part of the JSF's overall cost. I understand that the F-35 program is undertaking a number of reliability and maintainability initiatives that are focused on improvement in those areas.

Strategic Bomber

Secretary Hagel said on January 13, 2015, "I think the Long-Range Strike Bomber is absolutely essential for keeping our deterrent edge."

203. What are your views on the requirement for this capability, and how to acquire such a platform while providing the best value for the American taxpayer?

I believe the Department requires global power projection capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict in order to deter and dissuade potential aggressors. To maintain these capabilities, the Air Force requires a new generation of stealthy, long-range strike aircraft that can operate at great distances, carry substantial payloads, and operate in and around contested airspace. If confirmed I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics to ensure that the program will provide best value for the American taxpayer by ensuring the program is based on mature technologies and through program competition across a highly capable industrial base.

Navy Shipbuilding

Today's Navy is at its smallest size in decades and could decline further without additional urgent shipbuilding recapitalization efforts. Over the past several years, successive Chiefs of Naval Operations have concluded that the Navy requires a fleet of at least 306 ships to perform its mission. The Navy's current naval battle force is only 289 ships, and will not be at the 306 level until sometime after 2020.

204. What are your views regarding the CNO's conclusions about the appropriate size and composition of the fleet, and the adequacy of the Navy's current and projected plans to achieve a fleet with that number of ships?

A strong and capable Navy is essential to meet our nation's strategic requirements across the spectrum of operational demands. Therefore the Navy needs a broad set of capabilities

among the mix of ships in its inventory. Ship count is only one metric to measure to evaluate fleet effectiveness. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations to ensure that the appropriate force structure requirements are fully identified and supported.

At about that same time (2020) the Navy will need to begin acquiring the Ohio Replacement Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBNs). The new Ohio class boats are projected to cost well over \$10 billion per ship and the Navy has publicly indicated it cannot afford to buy both the new SSBNs as well as procure at least 9 other ships annually.

205. Do you believe the Navy can meet its goals for the size of the fleet in the current budget climate particularly in light of the Ohio Replacement Program?

Procurement of the Ohio Replacement SSBN, as well as recapitalization of the other elements of the nuclear triad, poses significant resourcing challenges to the DoD. The Ohio Replacement Program will present unique constraints on the Navy's shipbuilding plan, particularly if the DoD is required to be funded at the levels specified in the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. The Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations have stated that recapitalizing our ballistic missile submarine force is the top shipbuilding priority for the Navy and have taken steps to reach the affordability targets of the Ohio Replacement Program. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy and the Congress to manage the impact of this critical endeavor on the rest of the shipbuilding programs and ensure naval forces are structured to meet our national defense needs.

206. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Nation procured the initial Ohio SSBN submarines within the Navy's shipbuilding (SCN) account, do you believe using the SCN is possible for Ohio replacement or is a new method needed?

I believe the important decision is to make the commitment to modernizing the ballistic missile submarine fleet. It is a vital component of our nuclear deterrence strategy. The Department needs adequate resources for modernization in order to ensure we can make the orderly transition to this new generation ballistic missile submarine. Which account it is funded in is of lesser importance. It makes the most sense to include the Ohio Replacement in the shipbuilding account, but this is a decision that can be made in the future.

To maintain a Navy fleet with roughly 300 ships would require an annual new construction build rate of about 10 ships per year, assuming ship service lives of 30 years. The FY 2015 President's Budget request included only 7 new construction ships.

207. Do you believe that the Navy's goal can be achieved without recapitalizing the fleet at a larger rate? If not, will you recommend to the President that he significantly increase funding levels for the Navy to support both:

- (1) buying ships at an annual rate of at least 10 new ships per year; and**
- (2) and in particular replacing our *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN)?**

I understand the Department of Defense (DoD) remains committed to sustaining the force structure required to maintain our nation's security, and that recapitalization of the nation's sea-based strategic deterrent is critical to this mission. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy to reduce risk in their force structure with particular focus on Ohio-class replacement submarines and other high priority ships.

The Navy has in recent years proposed the long term lay up of CG-7 class cruisers and LSD-41 class amphibious ships in order to achieve manpower cost avoidance savings and stretch out the life of these ship classes in order to defer new build replacement ships. Congress has consistently rejected the Navy's proposal noting the Navy's initial investment of more than \$11.6 billion in the nine CG/LSD ships and the fact these ships are very unlikely to return to service after a lengthy layup approaching 5 years in some cases. Retiring these ships before the end of their planned service life creates unnecessary and unaffordable future shipbuilding requirements.

208. What are your views on the Navy's proposed plan to lay up in a reduced operating status both CG-47 class and LSD-41 class ships?

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and other Department leadership to better understand and assess how the Navy would execute the proposed plan, to ensure that it appropriately balances the needs of current readiness, modernization and future force structure to make the best use of existing assets.

209. Would you support modernizing these ships within the Navy's SCN account to ensure they can serve out their full service lives?

The SCN account, like virtually all modernization accounts, is under enormous pressure to finance the shipbuilding program the nation needs. Difficult tradeoff decisions have been made and will need to be made in the future. It is important that the Congress and the Department find a way to move forward on the appropriate funding.

Aircraft Carriers

The Department of Defense has repeatedly reaffirmed, despite budget pressures, that the U.S. is committed to maintaining a fleet of 11 nuclear powered aircraft carriers (CVNs), and maintaining carriers on patrol in the Persian Gulf. Yet, in the Department's FY 2015 budget request only 10 carriers were funded. We also

understand carrier deployments have been extended for as long as 9 months. The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) reiterated the statutory requirement for the Department to maintain not less than 11 carriers.

210. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense will you ensure the Department adheres to the statute requiring that the Navy shall include not less than 11 operational carriers?

I understand that the Department has reported that if it is forced to operate at sequestration level funding, it would have to seek relief from the 11-carrier requirement.

211. Can you articulate for this committee your views on the number of CVNs that need to be maintained, and whether naval forward presence, particularly in areas such as the Persian Gulf, should be maintained and can be maintained without an urgent recapitalization of the fleet?

I understand that a sizable carrier force is required to support our current strategy and provide sufficient carrier strike groups to meet overseas presence requirements. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy to ensure that we resource a sustainable level of presence that continues to support our nation's strategic goals.

Future Role of the Army

The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act directed the establishment of a National Commission on the Future of the Army to review the size and structure of all three components of the Army: regular Army, U.S. Army Reserve, and Army National Guard. The Commission will also consider and evaluate key policies concerning the make-up, training and the distribution of Guard resources across the states. Additionally, the commission will review the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative which recommended the transfer of National Guard Apache helicopters to the regular Army. The legislation allows the Army to transfer 48 Apache helicopters in FY16.

212. What are your views regarding the National Commission on the Future of the Army?

If confirmed, I will fully support the commission as enacted by law.

213. In your view, what are the key factors in determining the role of the active and reserve components in their support of the National Military Strategy?

In my previous time in the Department I have seen the value of the operational contributions of all Components. Their response in crisis has been and will be a Total Force response. The key factor is insuring the Total Force has the appropriate mix to support the requirements to the Combatant Commanders.

General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, has stated that the Army will continue to be an indispensable part of the joint force and that there is a synergy that is gained of all the services in order for the military to meet the Nation's needs. He has also said the Army provides more than Brigade Combat Teams -- the Army is the largest contributor to special operations forces and it provides a broad range of essential services to combatant commanders to include intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance; air and missile defense; logistical support; and signal communication support.

214. In your view, what are the most important considerations or criteria for aligning the Army's size, structure, and cost with strategy and resources?

Our national security requirements are the most important considerations when aligning the Total Army's size, structure, and cost with strategy and resources.

215. If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you propose to properly align the Army's size and structure with the requirements of security strategies and the likely availability of resources?

If confirmed, I will review how the Department should align the Army's size and structure to the strategy in the same way that it would align those of any other component of the Joint Force: based on appropriate security environment, examining the demands of the missions that are most relevant to that Component, and then determining how best to provide the capabilities required to accomplish those missions. If confirmed, I will work closely with military and civilian leaders to balance maintaining the skills needed to meet our most pressing national security demands within the limits of acceptable risk and within existing resources.

Army Force Structure

The Defense Strategic Guidance of January 2012 called for the reduction of Army end strength and force structure over the next five years to 490,000 personnel and eight fewer combat brigades. The Army has accelerated these plans and intends to reduce endstrength to 490,000 by the end FY15. Additionally, the Army intends to reduce endstrength to 450,000 active, 315,000 Army National Guard and 195,000 Army Reserve with even more severe reductions possible. Senior Army and National Guard leadership has testified that the Army will assume medium-to-high risk to meet the requirements of the National Security Strategy at these levels.

216. In your view, can the Army's active component end strength be drawn down below the announced and planned reduction to 450,000? If so, what in your view would be the impact on strategic risk, if any, and, in your view would that strategic risk be acceptable or unacceptable?

If confirmed, I will review the level of funding specified in the Budget Control Act, and the appropriate levels for the total force army. I share the concern by our Army, Army Reserve and the National Guard leaders of the risks inherent in the sequester funding levels.

217. How do you define the resulting strategic risk?

A strategic risk would be a lesser ability to support the highest priorities in our national defense strategy.

218. If confirmed, what size or force structure changes, if any, would you propose for either the Army Reserve or the Army National Guard?

The Active and Reserve Components of the Army must be sized and shaped to support our strategy. The Army National Guard provides critical capabilities to the Governors and States, while also retaining capacity to support vital Federal missions. The Army Reserve is also a key partner with the Active Army and the Army National Guard for Homeland support and warfighting missions. I understand that the Army Commission will examine some of these areas and if confirmed will look forward to their recommendations.

Army Modernization

219. What is your understanding and assessment of the Army's record with respect to equipment modernization?

This record is mixed, and I believe it can be improved.

220. What actions, if any, would you take to ensure that the Army achieves a genuinely stable, achievable, and affordable modernization strategy and program?

If confirmed, I will review the Army's modernization strategies to ensure that stable and affordable modernization programs are adopted and implemented. I will stress the continued need for Army programs that incorporate practical and realistic development strategies, affordable and technically feasible requirements and sufficient and stable resources.

221. What is your understanding and assessment, if any, of the Army's capabilities portfolio review process and its current modernization priorities and investment strategy?

I have not examined any recent changes the Army may have introduced so I am unable to assess the Army's specific processes for reviewing military requirements or establishing modernization priorities.

222. What actions, if any, would you take to sustain the momentum of these reviews in stabilizing the Army's modernization strategy and priorities?

If confirmed I will support the Army's efforts to improve its modernization strategy and priorities.

Unfunded Priorities

Section 1003 of Public Law 112-239 (NDAA for FY13) expressed the sense of Congress with respect to the annual submission by the Service Chiefs and Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command of their critical unfunded priorities that are not included in the President's annual budget request.

223. If confirmed, will you allow the Service Chiefs and Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command to comply with this sense of Congress?

Yes.

Ballistic Missile Defense

The FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act expresses the Sense of the Congress that it is a national priority to defend the United States homeland against the threat of limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate).

224. Do you concur with Congress on this fundamental point?

Yes.

225. Do you support each of the following steps – currently planned by the Department of Defense -- for improving the capability of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System to meet evolving ballistic missile threats (if not, please explain why):

1) Correct the problems associated with recent flight test failures;

Yes.

2) Enhance homeland defense sensor and discrimination capabilities;

Yes.

3) Redesign the exo-atmospheric kill vehicle, including realistic testing; and
Yes.

4) Design a next generation exo-atmospheric kill vehicle to take full advantage of improvements in sensors, discrimination, kill assessment, battle management, and command and control, including the potential to engage multiple objects?
Yes.

Forward deployed U.S. military forces, and our regional allies and partners, face a growing regional ballistic missile threat, especially from nations such as North Korea and Iran. The European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) is intended to provide increasing levels of defensive coverage of NATO Europe against Iranian ballistic missiles, including an Aegis Ashore site in Romania in 2015 and one in Poland in 2018.

226. Do you agree that it is a priority to defend our forward-deployed forces, our allies, and partners from the threat of regional ballistic missiles?

Yes. Our deployed forces as well as our allies and partners in the Middle East and in the Asia/Pacific region are within range of hundreds of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

I agree that the United States must prioritize capabilities to deter regional adversaries from launching a ballistic missile attack and to defend against such an attack if necessary.

227. Do you believe that the current phased and adaptive approach to regional missile defense is appropriate to meeting the operational needs of our regional combatant commanders, given the threat and current resource constraints?

Yes. I understand the current U.S. policy is to develop regional approaches to ballistic missile defense in Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region that are tailored to the unique deterrence and defense requirements of each region.

I believe that such approaches provide the best option for managing our own high-demand, low-density ballistic missile defense forces and for developing allied and partner ballistic missile defense capacity in support of Combatant Commander requirements.

228. Do you believe the EPAA schedule is achievable and appropriate for defending NATO Europe against the current and projected threat from Iranian regional ballistic missiles?

I believe the three phases of the EPAA were constructed to allow the United States to deploy existing or new capabilities in time to meet the projected threat from Iran. If confirmed, I will review the progress on this effort with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

229. Do you agree that the U.S. should encourage our regional allies and partners to increase their missile defense capabilities to contribute to regional security and help reduce the burden on U.S. forces and requirements?

I understand that building international cooperation and seeking appropriate levels of partner contributions are key tenets of our regional ballistic missile defense policy. I also understand that over time we have developed substantive ballistic missile defense relationships with our allies and partners in Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region, which have led to advances in fielding our own capabilities as well as those of our allies and partners.

I view continuing these partnerships as critical to developing effective security architectures that deter and, if necessary, can be used to defend against the threat of ballistic missile attack. Accordingly, if confirmed, I will promote strong bilateral and multilateral ballistic missile defense cooperation in these key regions of U.S. interest.

Space

China's test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007 was a turning point for the United States in its policies and procedure to ensure access to space. As a nation heavily dependent on space assets for both military and economic advantage, protection of space assets became a U.S. national priority.

230. Do you agree that space situational awareness and protection of space assets should be a national security priority?

Yes. Space situational awareness is important to understand and characterize the space environment, detect interference with space systems, and enable timely attribution and response. Equally important is the protection of our space capabilities.

231. In your view, should China's continued development of space systems inform U.S. space policy and programs?

Yes. China is rapidly developing space capabilities of its own that both mirror U.S. capabilities and could threaten our access and use of space for national security purposes. If confirmed, I will review the Department's efforts to address China's developments in space, and will coordinate closely with other U.S. departments and agencies.

232. If confirmed, would you propose any changes to National Security space policy and programs?

The National Security Space Strategy clearly highlights the growing challenges in the space domain. If confirmed, I will insist on policies, programs, and other measures that ensure U.S. warfighters can continue to depend on having the advantages that space confers.

233. What role do you believe offensive space control should play in National Security space policy and programs?

Offensive space control, in addition to other elements of national power, should be carefully considered in protecting our forces from threats posed by an adversary's space-enabled capabilities.

234. If confirmed, would you commit to reviewing the overall management and coordination of the national security space enterprise?

Yes. I understand that the Department's recent strategic portfolio review of space highlighted challenges with our overall space posture. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to make adjustments to address those challenges.

235. What is your view on weapons in space?

The United States depends upon space capabilities to enable operations in all domains. Other nations are working to challenge those capabilities as well as to field their own. If confirmed, I intend to work with Congress to determine the best way to defend U.S. space systems and to deny those advantages to those who would use space to target U.S. warfighters.

The administration is proposing to free up 500 MHz of spectrum for broadband use, a candidate portion of which includes the band 1755-1850 MHz, which is used heavily by Department of Defense and other national security agencies.

236. Do you support this initiative?

Yes.

237. Do you support section 1602 of P.L. 106-65, which requires the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to certify that any alternative band or bands to be substituted for spectrum currently used by the Department of Defense and other national security agencies provide "comparable technical characteristics to restore essential military capability that will be lost as a result of the band of frequencies to be so surrendered"?

Yes. This provision is necessary to ensure that the Department maintains access to spectrum necessary to operate critical military capabilities. Preserving this provision is essential to the ability of DoD to continue to successfully contribute to the President's broadband goals, especially given the increased focus on spectrum sharing.

238. If confirmed, how do you intend to comply with section 1602 in light of the 500 Mhz initiative?

I understand Secretary Hagel recently signed, along with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Commerce, certification for the 1755-1780 MHz frequency bands that were auctioned as part of the Advanced Wireless Service 3 (AWS-3). I will ensure that any future auctions involving spectrum used by the Department are certified in accordance with P.L. 106-65, Section 1062.

239. Do you intend to insist that DOD be compensated fully for the cost of relocating, if required to do so?

Yes, I intend to insist that DoD be compensated fully for the cost of relocating, if required to do so in accordance with Section 1062.

240. How do you propose the Department make more efficient use of communications spectrum through leasing of commercial satellites?

If confirmed, I will work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics and the DoD Chief Information Officer to continue to leverage the efforts which the DoD and commercial satellite communications providers are already pursuing to more effectively and efficiently utilize the communications spectrum. Based on that review, I will determine if additional opportunities should be pursued.

241. Do you support more competition in the launch of Department of Defense payloads?

I have been, and continue to be, whenever possible, a staunch advocate for competition across all of the Department's acquisition programs. Regarding space launch for National security Space (NSS) missions, I fully support competition and, if confirmed, will review provisions for competition of future national security space launch missions.

242. If confirmed, what steps will you take to encourage new entrants to the medium and heavy lift launch of Department of Defense payloads while balancing affordability, mission assurance, and maintaining the viability of the existing launch provider?

Mission assurance remains the cornerstone of the Department's approach to space launch for NSS missions. If confirmed, I will encourage competition from new entrants by ensuring the Department has a clear understanding of the certification process and by making every effort to certify all capable new entrants as quickly as possible.

243. Do you support commercial hosting of Department of Defense payloads and if so how?

The Department should explore and consider the full range of options. Commercial hosting

may help diversify the space architecture, improve mission assurance and potentially reduce costs of U.S. government space-based capabilities. If confirmed, I will explore the full range of options, including commercial hosting, for providing future space-based capabilities when appropriate.

244. What is your long term vision and support for the Space Based Infrared Sensing system?

I understand the Department is executing a comprehensive Analysis of Alternatives for the SBIRS follow-on capabilities. If confirmed, I will assess the alternatives and recommendations with the objective of affordably providing and assuring critical missile warning and battlespace awareness capabilities.

245. What is your long term vision and support for the Advanced Extremely High Frequency system?

I believe that AEHF is a critical component of the Department's Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) capability. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure the Department provides the needed NC3 capability for the President.

246. Do you support splitting the systems sensors up to lower overall cost of the system?

I support exploring the full range of approaches to reliably and affordably providing space-based capabilities

Cyber Deterrence

247. Do you believe we are deterring and dissuading our adversaries in cyberspace?

An effective deterrence strategy requires a range of cyber policies and capabilities to affect a state or non-state actors' behavior. In addition to continuing efforts to improve U.S. cyber defenses and cybersecurity capabilities, the United States should continue to respond to cyber-attacks against U.S. interests at a time, in a manner, and in a place of our choosing, using appropriate instruments of U.S. power and in accordance with applicable law. The U.S. government should continue to combine its cyber and non-cyber capabilities into a comprehensive cyber deterrence strategy. If confirmed, I will do all that I can to contribute to the development and execution of that effort.

248. Do you agree that, consistent with Section 941 of the FY14 National Defense Authorization Act, there is a need for an integrated policy to deter adversaries in cyberspace and that the President should promptly provide that policy to Congress as specified in law?

Deterrence cannot be achieved through cyberspace alone, but requires a multi-faceted effort across the totality of the U.S. government's instruments of national power, including network defense measures, economic actions, law enforcement actions, defense posture and response capabilities, intelligence, declaratory policy, and the overall resiliency of U.S. networks and systems. If confirmed, I will ensure that DoD is in full compliance with its reporting requirements to this Committee and to the Congress as a whole.

249. What steps do you believe the Department should take to reduce the frequency and severity of cyber intrusions from the Chinese government?

This is a serious problem and the Department should continue to take strong actions to address China's use of cyber theft to steal U.S. companies' confidential business information and proprietary technology. I am aware that the Administration has raised this as an issue of concern with the highest levels of China's government. If China does not take meaningful action to curb this behavior, it will undermine the economic relationship that benefits both our nations. Such activity undercuts the trust necessary to do business in a globally connected economy. Further, military involvement in such theft raises additional concerns that misunderstandings about China's intentions could result in unintended escalation between our countries. The U.S. Government should continue to use all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, informational, military, and economic, to prevent and respond to these intrusions.

250. What agencies should the Department coordinate with in tracking and eliminating cyber threats?

I believe a whole-of-government approach is required to address the cyber threats we face now and will increasingly face in the future. The Department of Defense must continue to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice (specifically FBI), and the Intelligence Community, as well as with other Federal partners, to identify, mitigate, and defend against cyber threats.

Reporting and Sharing of Information on Intrusions Into Operationally Critical Contractors

251. What are your views on the conclusions of the Senate Armed Services Committee's report: *Inquiry Into Cyber Intrusions Affecting U.S. Transportation Command Contractors*, 113th Congress, 2nd Session?

Although I have not had the opportunity to fully review the report, I understand that the

Senate Armed Services Committee's inquiry into cyber intrusions affecting U.S. Transportation Command contractors contained important findings that the Department takes very seriously. If confirmed, I will work closely with Congress, Departments and Agencies, and the private sector to strengthen the Department's information sharing processes and to protect the Department's ability to execute its mission.

252. If confirmed, what steps will you take to ensure that the communication gaps that exist between TRANSCOM and the various investigating agencies are closed?

The Department's ability to execute its mission depends greatly on the integrity of our networks and the networks of our private sector partners. If confirmed, I will work to improve information sharing between the relevant investigative agencies and U.S. Transportation Command.

Act of War in Cyber

253. What do you believe would constitute an act of war in cyberspace?

Cyber-attacks can affect our critical infrastructure, the national economy, and military operations. I believe that what is termed an act of war should follow the same practice as in other domains, because it is the seriousness, not the means, of an attack that matters most. Whether a particular attack is considered an "act of war," in or out of cyberspace, requires a determination on a case-by-case and fact-specific basis. Malicious cyber activities could result in death, injury or significant destruction, and any such activities would be regarded with the utmost concern and could well be considered "acts of war." An attack does not need to be deemed an "act of war" to require a response.

254. Does North Korea's attack on the Sony Corporation of America – a costly destructive attack on a U.S. company – rise to the level of an act of war? If not, why not?

To my knowledge, the damage caused by this cyber-attack consisted of the deletion of data, the destruction of some Sony network infrastructure, and the unauthorized disclosure of personal information. While serious and deserving of a response, this does not seem to me to rise to the level of an "act of war."

China's Aggressive Theft of U.S. Intellectual Property

A recent report by the National Counterintelligence Executive confirmed the widespread belief that China is engaged in a massive campaign to steal technology, other forms of intellectual property, and business and trade information from the United States through cyberspace. The previous Commander of U.S. Cyber Command has referred to this as the greatest transfer of wealth in history and, along with others, believes this is a serious national security issue.

255. Do you believe that China’s aggressive and massive theft of technology in cyberspace is a threat to national security and economic prosperity?

Yes. The theft of intellectual property through cyber means is a clear threat to the economic prosperity from which the nation derives its national security. Our competitive economic advantage and our military technological advantage rest on the innovations of a highly knowledge based U.S. industry. Any nation-state that engages in the theft of our intellectual property through cyber means jeopardizes both our national security and economic prosperity.

The Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 authorized the President to impose sanctions, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), on persons determined to knowingly request, engage in, support, facilitate, or benefit from economic or industrial espionage in cyberspace against United States persons.

256. What are your views on the potential impact of this legislation?

Addressing cyber threats requires a whole of government approach, which coordinates and integrates all the instruments of national power. Cyber legislation is an important part of this effort. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress on appropriate legislation to address a broad array of cybersecurity issues.

257. What additional steps do you believe are needed to deter China from such activities in the future?

We need to continue to use all the instruments of national power to deter this kind of behavior, including diplomatic, financial, network defense, law enforcement, and counterintelligence. I concur in the Administration's approach of raising this as an issue of concern at the highest levels of the Chinese government. I also support the State Department's efforts to work with like-minded countries to make China’s leadership increasingly aware that elements of their government and military are on the wrong side of an emerging norm of responsible behavior in cyberspace. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department's interagency partners to explore what additional whole-of-government approaches might help deter this unacceptable behavior.

DOD’s Role in Defending the Nation from Cyber Attack

258. What is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense in defending the Nation from an attack in cyberspace? In what ways is this role distinct from those of the homeland security and law enforcement communities?

The Defense Department is responsible for defending the Nation from all attacks, including those that occur in cyberspace. DoD is also responsible for defending its own networks against cyber-attacks. DoD plans, coordinates, and conducts cyber operations to ensure the

reliable operation of and to defend DoD systems and infrastructure. If directed, DoD can conduct cyber operations to defend the Nation, defend military networks, and support military operations in all domains. If required, DoD may provide support to the private sector and State and local governments.

The Defense Department also works closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) in their missions. DHS is the lead agency for protecting, mitigating, and recovering from domestic cyber incidents. DoJ investigates, attributes, disrupts, and prosecutes cybercrimes that fall outside of military jurisdiction and provides domestic response to national security incidents.

Next Challenges in Growing Operational Cyber Capabilities

The Department of Defense, in a significant milestone in the maturation of the cyber warfare mission, is successfully organizing and training personnel for units to conduct military operations in cyberspace.

- 259. What challenges does the Department face in developing the command and control, operational planning, mapping and situational awareness, battle damage assessment, tools and weapons, and infrastructure capabilities necessary to conduct large-scale operations in cyberspace?**

I understand that DoD is in its third year of building a Cyber Mission Force. This force is intended to defend DoD networks, defend the Nation from cyberattack, and provide full-spectrum cyberspace options for the Combatant Commands. I am aware of several challenges that should be addressed to ensure the Department can conduct military operations in cyberspace, among them effective command and control, and meeting the challenge of effectively incorporating National Guard teams.

Iran

Negotiations on the Iran nuclear program have been extended with a deadline now of March 1, 2015, for agreement in concept with 4 months after that to finalize a comprehensive agreement.

- 260. What are the elements of a nuclear agreement with Iran that you consider critical to ensuring that it is a “good” deal for U.S. national security interests?**

In my view, a “good” deal is one that resolves the international community’s concerns with Iran’s nuclear program and prevents it from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The best way to do that is through a comprehensive solution that, when implemented, will ensure that, as a practical matter, Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon and that Iran’s nuclear program is exclusively and verifiably peaceful. Any deal must effectively cut off the four pathways Iran could take to obtain enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon including a uranium pathway, through its activities at Natanz and Fordow; a plutonium pathway, through the Arak heavy water reactor; and a potential covert pathway. It must include tight constraints and

strict curbs on Iran's nuclear program. And finally, it must require robust monitoring and transparency measures to maximize the international community's ability to detect quickly any attempt by Iran to break out overtly or covertly. Any sanctions relief in exchange should be phased and tied to verifiable actions on Iran's part. Such relief should be structured to be easily reversed so that sanctions could be quickly re-imposed if Iran were to break its commitments.

261. If Iran is allowed to maintain a monitored and limited uranium enrichment program, do you believe that other states in the region will want to develop enrichment programs of their own and what is your rationale for that view?

Yet another reason to ensure that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon is to prevent proliferation in the region. States seeking to develop enrichment programs of their own in pursuit of nuclear weapons would face significant costs, in crippling sanctions and political and diplomatic isolation. The United States has a longstanding framework for providing alternative mechanisms to ensure that states have access to the benefits of civil nuclear energy without the need to pursue enrichment.

262. With the international community focused on the Iran nuclear negotiations, in your opinion, has there been a neglect of countering Iranian malign activities in the region to include support for Houthis in Yemen, Hamas in the West Bank, and Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria? How do you think those threats should be addressed?

Countering Iranian destabilizing activities must be an important priority. Regardless of the outcome of nuclear negotiations, I firmly believe that the United States must also counter these destabilizing regional activities, including Iran's support to terrorists and militant groups. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the Department is focused on these issues.

263. If the tide of ISIL is pushed back in Iraq and Syria, what, if, any, friction points do you anticipate between U.S. and Iranian interests in those two countries to come to the forefront? In your opinion, what is the best way to manage those friction points should they emerge?

In Syria, I believe that Iran's continued support for Assad and instability will cause continued friction between the U.S. and Iran. The U.S. has an interest in a stable, united, and inclusive Iraq with support from all of Iraq's communities. I have concerns about the sectarian nature of Iran's activities in Iraq. The United States must continue to make clear to the Iraqi government that Iran's approach in Iraq undermines the needed political inclusion for all Iraqi communities, which is required to ultimately defeat ISIL.

On March 2012, President Obama said he would "keep all options on the table to prevent a nuclear Iran."

264. Do you agree with the President's view that “all options should be on the table” to prevent a nuclear Iran?

Yes. I strongly support the President’s view that all options should be on the table to prevent a nuclear Iran.

Nuclear Weapons and Stockpile Stewardship

Congress established the Stockpile Stewardship Program with the aim of creating the computational capabilities and experimental tools needed to allow for the continued certification of the nuclear weapons stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable without the need for nuclear weapons testing. The Secretaries of Defense and Energy are statutorily required to certify annually to the Congress the continued safety, security, and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile.

265. As the stockpile continues to age, what do you view as the greatest challenges with respect to assuring the safety, reliability, and security of the stockpile?

The greatest challenge will be achieving and maintaining the necessary balance among three critical nuclear areas to allow continued certification that our nuclear weapons remain safe, secure, and effective. First, is the capability to continue to provide the science and engineering needed to assess an aging stockpile without underground testing. Second, is maintaining and strengthening the ability to extend the life of the warheads through a program of component refurbishment, replacement or rebuilding. The final area is sustaining and modernizing the aging infrastructure that provides the materials, components, and testing facilities essential for tomorrow’s nuclear enterprise.

266. Do you agree that the full funding of the President’s plan for modernizing the nuclear weapons complex, commonly referred to as the 1251 report, is a critical national security priority?

I support the President’s policy of maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist, and agree that funding the sustainment and modernization plan is a critical national security priority. As indicated in the report prepared pursuant to Section 1251 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010, this includes sustaining and modernizing nuclear weapon delivery platforms, sustaining a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear weapons stockpile, and modernizing the nuclear weapons complex.

267. Prior to completing this modernization effort, do you believe it would be prudent to consider reductions below New START Treaty limits for either the deployed or non-deployed stockpile of nuclear weapons?

The President has stated that we can meet our current objectives with a reduced force structure. Any consideration of further nuclear weapon reductions below New START

Treaty limits should focus on measures that will maintain or strengthen deterrence of potential adversaries, assurance of our Allies and partners, and strategic stability.

268. What role does the Nuclear Weapons Council play in helping to establish key stockpile stewardship goals and modernization objectives?

I previously chaired the Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) which facilitates cooperation and coordination, seeks consensus, and sets priorities between the two departments (Departments of Defense and Energy), as they fulfill their dual-agency responsibilities for nuclear weapons stockpile management. The NWC works toward jointly agreed to priorities and strategies for weapon life extension programs, stockpile stewardship, and infrastructure modernization objectives. The NWC priorities and strategies in turn provide requirements for both departments to formulate budgets and develop implementing plans to achieve our Nation's goals of a safe, secure and effective stockpile.

269. Do you support a more active role of the Office of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation (CAPE) in ensuring the programs within the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration are appropriately tailored for the best investment of funds possible to achieve a safe, effective and reliable nuclear weapons stockpile?

Yes.

Current Nuclear Forces

Section 1052 of the Fiscal year 2014 NDAA established a "Council on Oversight of the National Leadership Command, Control and Communications System". You have had a long and active history in this area of the Department of Defense.

270. What do you see as the most pressing challenges in nuclear command, control and communications from a policy and acquisition perspective?

Nuclear command and control must be an enduring priority of which one challenge is to sustain existing capabilities until new, modernized capabilities can be fielded. Another challenge is providing an assured, survivable and enduring nuclear command, control and communications (NC3) system that takes advantage of the technological advances of modern communication capabilities while at the same time is secure and hardened against attacks ranging from cyber to the most severe kinetic attacks.

271. What do you see as the most pressing challenges in overall national leadership communications from a policy and acquisition perspective?

One challenge is to sustain existing capabilities until new, modernized capabilities can be fielded. Another challenge is providing an assured, survivable and enduring communications capability that allows senior defense advisors to communicate with the President, the Combatant Commands and strategic Allies during normal day-to-day operations and during national crises from a fixed, mobile or airborne location. The ability to provide our national leadership secure, reliable voice, video and data communications is a critical capability.

272. Will you actively support Section 1052 and in an ex officio capacity attend meetings when possible?

Yes.

In 2014 Secretary Hagel has conducted an assessment of the state of nuclear deterrence operations of the Department of Defense.

273. Do you agree with its findings?

If confirmed, I intend to receive a full briefing about this important assessment.

274. Will you actively support the findings and their implementation?

I look forward to fully reviewing these findings, if confirmed, and taking appropriate steps to ensure the U.S. maintains the capability to carry out the nuclear deterrent mission.

Nuclear Modernization

The President's June 2013 Nuclear Employment Strategy affirmed that the United States will maintain a nuclear triad, noting that "Retaining all three TRIAD legs will best maintain strategic stability at reasonable cost, while hedging against potential technical problems or vulnerabilities."

Some commentators suggest it will be financially challenging for the current and future administrations to fulfill nuclear modernization commitments over the next 10 to 20 years. Yet, as Deputy Secretary of Defense, you noted in August 2013, "nuclear weapons...are not a big swinger in our budget. That's just a fact."

275. Do you share Secretary Hagel's view that our nuclear deterrent "is DOD's highest priority mission?"

Yes.

276. Will you provide us your commitment to ensure that the Department of Defense, working closely with the Department of Energy, will make every effort to invest what is

needed to modernize each leg of the nuclear triad, and to address the recent recommendations of the Department of Defense Nuclear Enterprise Review?

Yes.

Russian Violation of the 1987 INF Treaty

During testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on December 10, 2014, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Brian McKeon, told the panel that “if Russia does not return to compliance, our end will be to ensure that Russia gains no significant military advantage from its violation.”

277. In your view, what are the consequences for U.S. national security of Russia’s actions in violation of its obligations under the INF Treaty?

I believe that the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty contributes to the national security of the United States and its allies and partners. I also believe the INF Treaty contributes to Russian national security. Russian deployment of weapon systems that violate the INF Treaty would pose an increased threat to the United States and our allies in Europe and Asia.

278. What military advantage, if any, did Russia gain by acting in violation of its INF obligations?

We must ensure that Russia does not gain a military advantage. Russia should return to compliance with the INF Treaty in a verifiable manner.

279. What do you believe would be appropriate responses for the United States to take in order to: (1) convince Russia to return to compliance with the INF Treaty, or (2) ensure that U.S. national security is maintained if Russia does not return to compliance?

The United States should consider a comprehensive strategy of diplomatic, economic, and military responses that address both of these goals. Russia's continued disregard for its international obligations and lack of meaningful engagement on this particular issue require the United States to take actions to protect its interests and security as well as those of its allies and partners. U.S. efforts should continue to remind Russia why the U.S. and Russia signed this treaty in the first place and be designed to bring Russia back into verified compliance with its obligations. I believe that any U.S. responses should be designed to make the United States and our allies and partners more secure by negating any advantage Russia might gain from deploying an INF-prohibited system.

The range of options we should look at from the Defense Department could include active defenses to counter intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missiles; counterforce capabilities to prevent intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missile attacks; and

countervailing strike capabilities to enhance U.S. or allied forces. U.S. responses must make clear to Russia that if it does not return to compliance our responses will make them less secure than they are today.

280. How long do you believe we should wait to see if Russia returns to compliance?

I support the current efforts focusing on convincing Russia to return to verifiable compliance and preserving the viability of the INF Treaty, which I believe continues to serve U.S. and allied interests. Such efforts must be allowed to produce the desired effect. If Russia does not return to verifiable compliance, I support a path that ensures that Russia gains no significant military advantage from its violation of its INF Treaty obligations.

281. What does Russia's INF violation suggest to you about the role of nuclear weapons in Russian national security strategy?

Russia's INF Treaty violation is consistent with its strategy of relying on nuclear weapons to offset U.S. and NATO conventional military superiority.

Medical Countermeasures Initiative (MCMI)

The Administration has produced an interagency strategy for the advanced development and manufacture of medical countermeasures (MCM) to defend against pandemic influenza and biological warfare threats. In this strategy, the Department of Defense will be responsible for the rapid development and manufacture of medical countermeasures to protect U.S. Armed Forces and Defense Department personnel.

282. Do you support this interagency strategy and the MCM Initiative and, if confirmed, would you plan to implement them?

Yes.

Defense Acquisition Reform

The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (WSARA) was designed to ensure that new defense acquisition programs start on a sound footing, to avoid the high cost of fixing problems late in the acquisition process.

283. What are your views regarding WSARA since its implementation in 2009?

In my view, WSARA enacted a number of steps to improve weapons system acquisition, which has contributed to improving trends in the Department's acquisition performance.

284. If confirmed, how would you improve all three aspects of the acquisition process requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

In my judgment, more should be done to link and streamline these three processes and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with those responsible in the department and the Committees to drive the necessary improvements. All three must be closely coordinated as the problems and the resulting solutions change over time. This is not a static system and we must all remain open to continuous improvement. In the requirements area we need to insure they are feasible and disciplined and not subject to constant change and that we don't initiate programs that are unaffordable. As we move into the acquisition phase, we need to push to field the initial system within five years and avoid delays by constantly adding capabilities that could be done thru block improvements later. Time is money. We must incentivize industry to control costs and likewise incentivize the government acquisition workforce to do the same. Those responsible for budgeting, particularly the Service Chiefs, need to be engaged in all three processes. And we should strengthen accountability in all phases and at all levels.

285. If confirmed, how would you improve acquisition accountability?

As before, more can be done here as well. There are two basic challenges in improving accountability. First is an overly complex acquisition system that distributes authority across too many offices and individuals; and secondly, assignment policies in the government rotate senior program managers and officials too frequently. If confirmed, I will engage our department leaders in addressing these challenges and also work with the Congress to both obtain your ideas and to push thru the required fixes. We must also insure our industry partners achieve this increased level of accountability.

286. Do you believe that the current investment budget for major systems is affordable given increasing historic cost growth in major systems, costs of current operations, and asset recapitalization?

The constrained budget environment facing the Department puts enormous pressure on the Department to continually strive to control costs and reexamine all areas of the budget for affordability. Even before the passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011 I strongly believed that unacceptable cost growth in individual programs had to be reversed. If confirmed, in addition to the improvements I cited in earlier answers, I will insure the Department ensures programs are affordable to buy and operate, and that programs are managed so as to stay affordable as they progress through the life cycle.

287. If confirmed, how do you plan to address this issue and guard against the potential impact of weapon systems cost growth?

If confirmed, I would emphasize the need for continuous improvement addressing the challenges identified earlier as well as ensuring all aspects of WSARA and the Department's ongoing work with the Better Buying Power initiatives continue to be implemented as broadly as possible. I would welcome the opportunity for the Department to work with Congress where new legislative measures, or relief from existing legislative constraints, would improve acquisition performance.

Reliability of Weapons Systems

The Department's process for procuring major weapons systems places insufficient emphasis on reliability and maintainability and, therefore, produces systems that are increasingly costly to operate and sustain. Given that these ownership costs comprise most of a given weapons systems' overall lifecycle cost, these increased costs could undermine considerably the Department's "buying power."

288. How would you ensure that the defense acquisition system produces more reliable weapons systems?

I recognize that a strong emphasis on reliability is critical to achieving affordability. A disciplined approach to life cycle reliability in acquisition policy must continue and we need to use sustainment affordability caps when appropriate. . If confirmed, I will ensure that our acquisition programs address reliability and maintainability through appropriate requirements and sound engineering practices at each stage of a weapon system's development.

289. If confirmed, what measures would you recommend the Department take to drive down sustainment costs?

It is important to influence system designs that address key drivers of sustainment costs early in the development process, and to have program managers include sound sustainment strategies early in a system's life cycle. The Department has established sustainment affordability caps under the Better Buying Power initiatives to drive that process with its Program Managers.

If confirmed, I will emphasize those elements in our acquisition programs such as requirements, design, contracting strategies, and sustainment strategies which drive down sustainment costs.

Excessive Concurrency in Major Defense Acquisition Programs

Major defense acquisition programs (MDAPs) and major automated information systems have experienced excessive cost-growth and schedule delays. In some instances, this appears to be the result of excessive concurrency between development and production. It also appears that the Department lacks the ability to identify, price, and therefore effectively manage program risk, (e.g., technological, developmental, integration, and manufacturing risk)

290. What specific changes need to be made in the acquisition system to ensure the delivery of MDAPs and major information systems on time and on budget?

Comprehensive changes in acquisition practice have been made in recent years via WSARA and BBP. But more needs to be done, and the measures needed will change over time as technology, industry, and budgets change. Skilled and experienced acquisition professionals, reduction of paperwork and overhead, and effective contract incentives are enduring keys to

cost and schedule control.

Managing concurrency and other program risks is a fundamental challenge of acquisition program management. The department needs to ensure its acquisition professionals have the experience, tools, and good judgment needed to make data-driven decisions appropriate to the risks they face leading these programs in order to properly plan programs.

Services Contracting

Over the last decade, the Department has become progressively more reliant upon contractors to perform functions that were once performed exclusively by government employees. As a result, contractors now play an integral role in areas as diverse as the management and oversight of weapons programs, the development of personnel policies, and the collection and analysis of intelligence. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as DOD employees.

291. In your view, has DOD become too reliant on contractors to support the basic functions of the Department?

I believe DoD must manage its total force of military, civilian, and contractor personnel in a way that avoids inappropriate or excessive reliance on contractor support for basic Department functions.

292. Do you believe that the Department of Defense has become too dependent on contractor support for military operations?

Based on my experience, I do not believe the Department is too reliant on contractor support for military operations.

293. What risks do you see in the Department's reliance on such contractor support? What steps do you believe the Department should take to mitigate such risk?

Over-reliance on contractor support may lead to an unbalanced total force that sub-optimizes the civilian and military contribution, a loss of government-held corporate knowledge, and the potential for contractors inappropriately exercising authority in performance of inherently governmental functions or those closely associated with inherently governmental functions.

Active management of the total force is necessary to mitigate these risks. Decisions on how to cost-effectively meet requirements should take into account the management of all three components of the total force.

294. Do you believe the Department is appropriately organized and staffed to effectively manage contractors on the battlefield?

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, in concert with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has issued guidance on roles and responsibilities for planning for and managing contractors on the battlefield. I believe that investments made in the Department's acquisition workforce, as well as the implementation of recommendations made by the Commission on Wartime Contracting and the GAO, have improved the Department's ability effectively to plan for and manage contractors on the battlefield. I believe that the Combatant Commanders recognize that contractors are their responsibility as part of the total force.

295. What steps if any do you believe the Department should take to improve its management of contractors on the battlefield?

I believe appropriate requirements definition and increased oversight are critical to improve management of contractors on the battlefield. The heightened focus on services acquisition reinforces this with proper planning, management, training, and oversight tools.

Efficiency in Department Operations

296. In your view, what latitude must be given to the Joint Chiefs to enact cost-saving reforms?

The Military Service Chiefs of Staff already have broad latitude to develop, propose and implement cost-saving measures across the spectrum of doctrine, organizational structure, and personnel to and with their Military Department Secretaries, the Combatant Commands, and the Secretary of Defense. I will continue to encourage them to bring forward cost-saving reform ideas even if those ideas challenge the current structures and arrangements of the Department as a whole. As in the past, I value the Chiefs' unswerving focus on the essential missions of the Department, and the perspectives that motivation brings.

297. Do you support the Administration's request for the authority to conduct additional Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC) to eliminate unneeded facilities?

Yes.

298. If so, what would be your priorities in carrying out a round of BRAC?

Should Congress authorize the Department to carry out another BRAC round, I would direct it to focus on efficiency and consolidation rather than transformation. BRAC 2005 was skewed by the fact that a large number of its recommendations were focused on transformation, had high up-front costs, and were never expected to yield savings. However, those recommendations that were focused on efficiency had impressive payback and accounted for a small portion of the costs – much like the 1993 and 1995 rounds. If

confirmed, this is the approach I would direct the Department to adopt.

Unified Command Plan

There has been much discussion about streamlining the current Unified Command Plan.

299. What are your views on the ability of the current Unified Command structure to address emerging global, regional and ethnic threats and the potential need to reduce the number of the geographic commands or their staffs to help reduce overhead costs?

In my view, the current Unified Command structure is quite capable of addressing a range of emerging threats and challenges. Effective U.S. responses to such varied challenges as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and Ebola, demonstrate the flexibility of the current structure. However, the Department periodically reviews the Unified Command Plan to ensure its structure is optimized for emerging threats and challenges. As such a review is underway now; it would be premature to speculate on the types of changes that will be reflected in its final recommendations on the structure.

300. What is your opinion of the critique that Geographic Combatant Commands have made U.S. foreign policy “too militarized”?

I am sensitive to this critique, but understand that some degree of tension is inevitable in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives. As long as the United States maintains forward presence around the world, we will continue to rely on our military leadership to build meaningful relationships with their counterparts. These relationships are essential to our continued forward presence in peacetime, building partner capacity with key allies and partners, and to our ability to secure access in the event of a contingency, from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to combat operations. Provided our activities are well coordinated with other stakeholders within the U.S. foreign policy establishment, there is no reason why both military and other foreign service professionals cannot contribute to the same U.S. objectives.

301. What is your understanding and assessment of the current Unified Command Plan? In your view, is there a need to undertake a major reevaluation toward modification of the current Unified Command Plan? If so, explain why?

The Unified Command Plan establishes the combatant commands' missions, responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility (when applicable). In my view, the established, periodic review cycle of the Unified Command Plan should be maintained.

302. In your view, are there opportunities for greater effectiveness and efficiencies in the consolidation of the roles and responsibilities two or more current geographic combatant commands, such as U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command? If not, please explain why.

The Department reviews the Unified Command Plan periodically to ensure its structure is optimized for emerging threats and challenges, and for effective and efficient distribution of roles and responsibilities among combatant commands. Such a review is underway now; it would be premature to speculate on the types of changes that will be reflected in the final structure.

Proliferation of Joint Task Forces

There is a trend of continued proliferation of task forces, including joint task forces, in support of geographic combatant and functional commands. Some of these joint headquarters are temporary or for a short duration, but others evolve into enduring long term and larger force structure.

303. What is your understanding and assessment of the Department of Defense's policy guidance for oversight of the number, scope of operational responsibility and authority and duration of joint task forces?

I understand that the Department's policy guidance for oversight of joint task forces that support combatant commands is established and exercised through the global force management process. Through this process, combatant commanders request authorities and forces to support their operational requirements and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff evaluates such requests and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. I have been away from the department for some time and therefore unable to make a specific assessment of the current policy and guidance.

304. If confirmed, what would be your plan to evaluate and manage task forces?

If confirmed, I would remain committed to the best use of resources in the pursuit of the department's priorities and objectives and would scrutinize recommendations to standup and/or continue support for enduring joint task forces.

Test and Evaluation (T&E)

- 305. If confirmed, will you make it a priority to ensure that the Department as a whole and each of the Services specifically maintains its testing organizations, infrastructure, and budgets at levels adequate to address both our current and future acquisition needs?**

I recognize the critical role that test and evaluation provides to the acquisition process.

A natural tension exists between major program objectives to reduce cost and schedule and the T&E objective to ensure performance meets specifications and requirements.

- 306. What is your assessment of the appropriate balance between the desire to reduce acquisition cycle times and the need to perform adequate testing?**

I don't believe these objectives are necessarily incompatible. Adequate testing prior to committing to production is essential to discover performance problems that can take even more time and money to rectify before proceeding.

- 307. Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe we should procure weapon systems and equipment that has not been demonstrated through test and evaluation to be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable?**

It may be necessary to field a system prior to operational testing in cases where it is necessary to fill a critical capability gap identified in ongoing operations. Even then, testing should be accomplished to ensure basic operational performance and system safety.

Congress established the position of Director of Operational Test and Evaluation to serve as an independent voice on matters relating to operational testing of weapons systems. As established, the Director has a unique and direct relationship with Congress, consistent with the statutory independence of the office.

- 308. Do you support the continued ability of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation's to speak freely and independently with the Congress?**

Yes.

Funding for Science and Technology (S&T) Investments

- 309. Do you support increasing DOD's S&T investments?**

I support investment in S&T to develop and deliver near-term capabilities and maintain long-term options for the Department. However, the investment in S&T must be balanced with modernization, operational, and personnel accounts within the Department.

310. How will you assess whether the science and technology investment portfolio is adequate to meet the current and future needs of the Department?

If confirmed, I would work closely with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, and others to assess the adequacy of the science and technology portfolio to provide the most affordable military advantage to our warfighters.

311. What specific technological areas should the Defense Department prioritize for investment in order to develop next generation operational capabilities?

If confirmed, I will review changes to the investment portfolio that have occurred since I left, and I will prioritize efforts to provide substantial capability advances or those that impose disproportionate cost to adversaries.

312. Given limited resources, what technological areas can be de-emphasized in order to free resources to support priority areas?

If confirmed, I would work with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, to review the entire investment portfolio in R&D and if required adjust the investment, to favor new, unique capabilities that could provide an operational advantage to our forces. Technologies that can be obtained from commercial sources should be de-emphasized for S&T investments by the Department.

313. Are you satisfied with the quality of the DOD research, laboratory, and engineering workforce and infrastructure, especially relative to its industry and academic peers, and global competitors? How do you plan to maintain that quality in the future?

The subject of DOD laboratory quality, both for personnel and infrastructure, has been studied over the past several decades. Scientists and engineers play a very important role in our overall national security and accessing and retaining top talent is a priority for the DOD. If confirmed, I will support the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics in his efforts to assess the current quality of our science and engineering workforce, and determine what changes, if any, are needed to maintain the proper quality.

314. What specific goals will you set for the recently announced Defense Innovation Initiative? What metrics will you use to assess the success of this initiative?

I understand the Defense Innovation Initiative is pursuing creative ways to sustain and advance our military dominance in the 21st century. If confirmed, I will review this initiative in detail and if necessary work with Deputy Secretary Work to refine goals and metrics.

Defense Industrial Base

The latest Quadrennial Defense Review addressed the need for strengthening the defense industrial base. Specifically, it said: “America’s security and prosperity are increasingly linked with the health of our technology and industrial bases. In order to maintain our strategic advantage well into the future, the Department requires a consistent, realistic, and long-term strategy for shaping the structure and capabilities of the defense technology and industrial bases—a strategy that better accounts for the rapid evolution of commercial technology, as well as the unique requirements of ongoing conflicts.”

315. What is your understanding and assessment of the current state of the U.S. defense industry?

The Department relies on an industrial base that is now far more global, commercial, and financially-complex than ever before. I am concerned about what impacts further defense budget cuts would have on the ability of the industrial base, particularly small firms, to provide the broad range of products and services that the Department and our nation need. While only a small fraction of our industrial base capabilities may be at risk, in some key industrial capabilities vital to our future national security the United States is in danger of losing essential domestic sources, or going down to a single qualified source.

316. Do you support further consolidation of the U.S. defense industry?

I support the review of each proposed merger, acquisition, and teaming arrangement on its particular merits, in the context of each individual market and the changing dynamics of that market. I believe the government must be alert for consolidations that eliminate competition or cause market distortions that are not in the Department’s best interest.

317. What is your position on foreign investment in the U.S. defense sector?

Foreign investment can play an important role in maintaining the vitality of the U.S. defense sector through capital injection, the introduction of innovative technologies, and facilitating interoperability with our coalition partners. However, foreign investment can also expose the U.S. defense sector to a number of risks associated with supply assurance, product integrity, and technology transfer. Therefore, I support policies that encourage foreign investment when it is consistent with the national security interests of the United States.

318. If confirmed, what steps if any do you believe the Department of Defense should take to most effectively and efficiently manage risk and ensure the continued health of the U.S. defense industrial base?

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department proactively monitors the defense industrial base to identify risks and mitigate those risks when necessary. During my time as the Under Secretary of Defense, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics and the Deputy Secretary, the

Department took steps to improve and preserve competition in defense procurements, and I would support the creation or continuation of competitive opportunities.

Reset and Reconstitution Funding

The Department has a substantial backlog of maintenance availabilities due to the high tempo and demand of more than a decade of combat operations. Senior DOD officials have testified that they will require 2-3 years of additional funding to restore readiness through reset and reconstitution of their equipment and personnel.

319. Do you agree with the assessment that the DOD will need 2-3 years of additional funding for reset and reconstitution?

I understand that the cumulative effect of more than a decade of war has placed a significant strain on the Department's reset and reconstitution requirements. The current level and diversity of global operations has added to this strain and must be part of the reset calculus. If confirmed, I would review the reset and reconstitution funding and assumptions.

320. If confirmed, how will you balance maintenance and reset requirements with fiscal realities and future risk in developing your budget request?

Maintenance and reset of DoD's current equipment would be a priority for me in order to restore and preserve long-term readiness. . If confirmed, I would work with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Secretaries of the Military Departments, and others to assess the appropriate balance of resources and risk.

Operational Energy

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs published a policy that any alternative drop-in replacement fuel procured for DOD-wide use and distribution within the Class III (Bulk) supply chain must compete with petroleum products and any awards will be based on the ability to meet requirements at the best value to the government, including cost.

321. What is your view of this policy?

This policy was issued while I was Deputy Secretary, and I believe it is the right approach, and it is consistent with Section 316 of FY 15 NDAA. As the Department allocates limited resources to ensure warfighting capability, it should only buy large volumes of alternative fuels when they are cost-competitive with petroleum products.

322. What is your assessment of Section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and how it should apply to military operations of the Department of Defense?

My understanding is that Section 526 prevents Federal agencies from entering into contracts to procure alternative or synthetic fuels that have higher greenhouse gas emissions than conventional petroleum. This provision has not restricted the Department from purchasing the bulk fuel needed to support worldwide military operations.

323. Considering the potential of further cuts to Defense budgets and the importance of energy security, do you believe the Department of Defense should jointly invest with other government agencies in the construction of a commercial biofuels refinery?

Over the long-term, I believe the nation will benefit from a competitive, domestic renewable fuels industry, and, as a major consumer of liquid fuels, the Department would benefit from such competition. I am aware the DoD has partnered with the Departments of Energy and Agriculture and the private sector to accelerate the development of cost-competitive advanced alternative fuels for both the military and commercial transportation sectors but I am not current on how those partnerships are performing.

324. If confirmed, what priorities would you establish for Defense investments in and deployment of energy technologies?

Consistent with the need to increase military capabilities, reduce risk, and mitigate costs through our use and management of both operational and facility energy, I would prioritize improvements to both operational effectiveness and efficiency – improving the energy performance of aircraft, ships, ground vehicles, and military bases; reducing the vulnerability of our energy supply chains; and diversifying the kinds of energy used by the Department.

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.

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

Yes

326. 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 Secretary of Defense?

Yes

327. **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

328. **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