

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for General Anthony J. Cotton, U.S. Air Force
Nominee for Appointment to the Position of Commander,
United States Strategic Command

Duties

1. What is your understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM)?

The Commander, USSTRATCOM creates plans and conducts operations to deter strategic attacks against the U.S. and our Allies; and, should deterrence fail, restore deterrence, in concert with the Joint Force with the goal of defeating our nation's adversaries. The Unified Command Plan (UCP) assigns USSTRATCOM eight specific responsibilities: Strategic Deterrence; Nuclear Operations; Global Strike; Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations; Missile Defense; Analysis and Targeting; Missile Threat Assessment, and DoD NC3 Enterprise Lead. These diverse responsibilities are strategic in nature, global in scope and intertwined with Joint Force capabilities, the interagency process, and a whole-of-government approach.

2. What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform the duties and responsibilities of the Commander, STRATCOM?

I began my Air Force career over 36 years ago as a Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile launch officer assigned to Strategic Air Command, the predecessor to U.S. Strategic Command. During my career, I have directly served in three of USSTRATCOM's eight mission areas: strategic deterrence, nuclear operations, and global strike. I also have extensive experience with the nuclear command, control, and communications enterprise, an essential element to performing these mission areas.

Additionally, I have commanded organizations at all levels, with each having equities within USSTRATCOM's portfolio. I commanded both the 341st Missile Wing and 45th Space Wing, Twentieth Air Force, and currently serve as the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command and the Joint Force Air Component Commander to USSTRATCOM. All of my experiences have prepared me to address today's concerns and help work to solve tomorrow's challenges as the next leader of USSTRATCOM.

It a privilege and an honor to serve this great Nation, and I fully recognize the complexity of this job in light of the present and projected global security situation.

- 3. Given the lines of effort set forth in the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS), what other duties do you anticipate the President or the Secretary of Defense might prescribe for you, if confirmed?**

Commander, USSTRATCOM is assigned responsibilities as currently stipulated in the 2020 Unified Command Plan. The application of Integrated Deterrence to advance NDS priorities requires an increasingly robust integration between USSTRATCOM, the other Combatant Commands and the Interagency. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Combatant Commanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other senior military and civilian leaders regarding the duties assigned to Commander, USSTRATCOM.

- 4. In your view, are there other roles or responsibilities that should be assigned to the Commander, STRATCOM?**

The President's 2020 Unified Command Plan clearly delineates the responsibilities of Commander, USSTRATCOM. If confirmed, I will evaluate and assess the command's mission effectiveness and provide any recommendations, as necessary, regarding USSTRATCOM roles and responsibilities.

- 5. Do you believe that there are any steps you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties and responsibilities of the Commander, STRATCOM?**

While I am not an expert in all USSTRATCOM responsibilities, if confirmed, I will endeavor to obtain the requisite expertise across USSTRATCOM's full portfolio of missions. I look forward to working with the other Combatant Commanders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense and other senior military and civilian leaders to ensure mission success and that our strategic deterrent remains safe, strong, and effective.

- 6. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that your tenure as Commander, STRATCOM, epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?**

Civilian control of the Armed Forces is a bedrock principle founded in the Constitution and applicable laws, and it is the core of the American civil-military dynamic. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to fully support civilian leadership by providing expert advice and an honest perspective. Additionally, I will faithfully participate in and support the role of Congressional oversight, which is an equally important function to connect the military with the American people's elected officials.

Chain of Command and Relationships

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 through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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

Yes.

8. In your view, do these provisions properly effectuate civilian control of the military? Please explain your answer.

Yes. The chain of command originates from the President to the Secretary of Defense, and from the Secretary to combatant command commanders. If confirmed, I will be a committed advisor to our nation's senior military and civilian leaders and execute lawful orders as directed.

9. 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 other than the chain of command established under title 10, U.S. Code?

No, but if the President or Congress deemed such a change appropriate, U.S. military personnel would still be accountable to the Title 10 chain of command and subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Law of Armed Conflict during any operation.

10. In your view, what factors should be considered in making recommendations to the Secretary of Defense and the President for the use of strategic forces and capabilities?

Factors for consideration are highly situation dependent but will likely include, but are not limited to, the specific National security objectives to be achieved; the consequences of employing vice not employing strategic force; and the anticipated effects of this action (or non-action) on the vital interests of the United States, its Allies and partners. Any such decision would only be made in accordance with the principles of Law of Armed Conflict and via a deliberative process involving the appropriate senior leaders across the government.

The law and traditional practice establish important relationships between the Commander, STRATCOM, and other senior officials of the DoD and the U.S. Government. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, STRATCOM, to each of the following officials:

11. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Likewise, for global military integration, the Chairman advises the Secretary on the allocation and transfer of forces to address trans-regional, multi-domain and multifunctional threats. The Chairman is the most senior ranking member of the armed forces but does not exercise command authority over any military forces or serve in the chain of command between the President and Secretary of Defense and Combatant Commanders. The Chairman consults with the Combatant Commanders, and evaluates and assists in achieving their requirements and plans.

The Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who performs such duties as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff may prescribe, is by law the second ranking member of the Armed Forces and acts for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his absence or disability. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, keeping them informed on all matters for which I am responsible as Commander, USSTRATCOM.

12. The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for all matters pertaining to acquisition; contract administration; logistics and materiel readiness; installations and environment; operational energy; nuclear, chemical, and biological defense; the acquisition workforce; and the defense industrial base. USSTRATCOM works closely with this office to both sustain current forces and advance the current nuclear modernization program, as well as advocate for future capabilities to ensure a safe, secure, reliable, and effective strategic deterrent. The Under Secretary also chairs the Nuclear Weapons Council of which the Commander, USSTRATCOM is a member. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary on matters related to USSTRATCOM.

Additionally, if confirmed, I would work with the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment in their role as the NC3 Capability Portfolio Manager and NC3 Principal Staff Assistance to advocate and field modernized NC3 capabilities.

13. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for defense policy and leads the formulation and coordination of National security policy within the Department of Defense. The USD(P) ensures the integration of defense policies and plans to achieve desired objectives, and is also responsible for strengthening relationships and defense cooperation with U.S., Allies, and partners. These policies, along with other National-level direction, guide USSTRATCOM strategic planning and operations.

14. The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)) is the principal staff advisor on all research, engineering, and technology development activities and programs in the Department. The USD(R&E) serves as the Department's chief technology officer with the mission of advancing technology and innovation for the armed forces, to include advancing those capabilities supporting USSTRATCOM's assigned mission areas.

In addition, the USD(R&E) has the oversight lead for critical capabilities managed by defense agencies and field activities with whom USSTRATCOM regularly interacts, including the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Missile Defense Agency, Defense Innovation Unit, and the Defense Science and Innovation Board offices. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Under Secretary for Research and Engineering on all matters specific to USSTRATCOM.

15. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense, Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on National Security and Defense Strategy and the capabilities, force, and contingency plans necessary to implement the Defense Strategy.

The Assistant Secretary supports the Secretary and Deputy Secretary in providing DoD with guidance to align resources, activities and capabilities with National Security and Defense Strategy goals, which influences USSTRATCOM's global force posture, strategic planning, and operations. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary on matters related to the USSTRATCOM portfolio.

16. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy is responsible for the overall supervision of policy for the Department of Defense for space warfighting. Their policy portfolio encompasses the Department's strategic capabilities for integrated deterrence: space, nuclear weapons, cyber, missile defense, electromagnetic warfare, and countering weapons of mass destruction. The Assistant Secretary also serves as the Principal Cyber Advisor to the Secretary of Defense. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Assistant Secretary on matters related to integrated deterrence, nuclear weapons, electromagnetic warfare and other missions, as appropriate, within the USSTRATCOM portfolio.

17. The Commander, U.S. Northern Command

Commander, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) is responsible for Homeland Defense, which is closely tied to USSTRATCOM's strategic deterrence mission. The Commander, USNORTHCOM, is also the Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which conducts aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning in the defense of North America. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Commander, USNORTHCOM, to strengthen strategic deterrence and assure our Allies and partners.

18. The Commander, U.S. Space Command

Commander, U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM) is responsible for the planning and execution of global space operations as directed. USSTRATCOM continues to support USSPACECOM's progress towards Full Operational Capability.

USSPACECOM provides vital space resources and capabilities to USSTRATCOM in support of its assigned missions. If confirmed, I will continue the close collaboration with Commander, USSPACECOM, in matters affecting both Commands, our Nation, and our Allies and partners.

19. The Commander, U.S. European Command

U.S. European Command's (USEUCOM) mission in the European area of responsibility is to secure and defend the United States and its Allies and partners. In light of the strategic implications of the recent Russian aggression in Ukraine, this is a vitally important and critical endeavor. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander, USEUCOM, to achieve mission success and to strengthen strategic deterrence for our Nation and our Allies and partners.

20. The Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's (USINDOPACOM) mission is to secure and defend the United States and its Allies, and partners in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. Commander, USINDOPACOM has a very diverse area of responsibility with a growing number of strategic challenges, including China's rapid military expansion. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Commander, USINDOPACOM, to achieve mission success and to strengthen strategic deterrence for our Nation and our Allies and partners.

21. The Director of the Missile Defense Agency

The Director, Missile Defense Agency deploys and maintains an effective and robust layered missile defense system capable of defending the United States, our Allies, and deployed forces. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Director, the Joint Staff, and the other Combat Commanders to improve missile defense capabilities and ensure they remain effective against the developing and increasingly complex missile threats.

22. The Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration

By law the Department of Energy's Under Secretary for Nuclear Security is the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The Administrator's responsibilities include all programs and activities necessary to maintain and enhance the safety, reliability, and performance of the Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile. Additionally, the Administrator serves as a principal on the Nuclear Weapons Council and executes duties of importance to USSTRATCOM, but remains independent of the Department of Defense's operational control. If confirmed, I will confer regularly and work closely with the Administrator.

Major Challenges

23. In your view, what are the major challenges you would confront if confirmed as the Commander, STRATCOM?

The challenges facing USSTRATCOM are unprecedented. For the first time in history, the Nation will soon face the need to deter two nuclear capable competitors who will have the capability to unilaterally escalate a conflict to any level of violence, in any domain, worldwide, at any time and with any instrument of national power. The 2022 NDS directs the Department to act urgently to sustain and strengthen deterrence, with the People's Republic of China (PRC) as our most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department. Russia also poses acute threats, as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. This strategic environment requires an integrated deterrence approach from the Joint Force, working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, spectrum of conflict, other instruments of U.S. national power in our network of alliances and partnerships.

I fully support modernizing our strategic nuclear deterrent capabilities across the Triad, the supporting stockpile and infrastructure, Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications, and our Integrated Tactical Warning/Attack Assessment capabilities. Many of these efforts are just-in-time with little to no margin for delay.

As the Commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, I directly support USSTRATCOM as the Joint Force Air Component Commander by providing two of the three legs of the Triad. I am confident USSTRATCOM employs a highly-trained and effective strategic deterrent force ready to respond decisively if called upon.

If confirmed, I will continue existing efforts to deter nuclear competitors and continue comprehensive assessments to validate force readiness and the effectiveness of existing efforts to sustain the existing force and to ensure nuclear modernization plans are realized. Continuity and oversight of these efforts are critical to ensuring USSTRATCOM is always postured to deter strategic attacks against the United States, our Allies and partners.

24. What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I plan to be a strong advocate for our Nation's strategic forces. I support the need to sustain and modernize our nuclear Triad and its supporting infrastructure, along with the continued development of current and future capabilities required to deter strategic attack in all domains against the U.S., Allies, and partners.

Additionally, if confirmed, I will continue to lead the effort to modernize and synchronize Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications and the Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations. I will also work with the Office of Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, and other Combatant Commands to further the development of integrated global planning, posturing, and operations.

National Defense Strategy

The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) puts forward an integrated deterrence framework that incorporates the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and Missile Defense Review (MDR) under the NDS. The priorities of the strategy are (1) defending the homeland; (2) deterring strategic attacks against the United States, Allies, and partners; (3) deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary, prioritizing the PRC challenge in the Indo-Pacific, then the Russia challenge in Europe and (4) building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.

25. In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the current strategic environment, including prioritization of the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its Allies? Please explain your answer.

Yes, in my view, the NDS accurately assesses the security environment. Outcomes of the NDS reflect close coordination across the Department, to include with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

26. In your view, does the 2022 NDS correctly specify and prioritize DoD missions in the context of the current strategic environment?

The NDS correctly articulates the Department's priorities in the current strategic environment. It highlights Integrated Deterrence as one of the Department's principal approaches to advance these priorities – working seamlessly across warfighting domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict, other instruments of National power, and our Alliances and partnerships.

27. In your view, does the 2022 NDS specify the correct set of capabilities by which the United States can achieve its security objectives in the face of ongoing competition and potential conflict with China or Russia? What do you perceive as the areas of greatest risk?

The NDS correctly notes that the foundation for deterring aggression requires building enduring advantages across the DoD, defense industrial base, private sector and academia to innovate and modernize the Joint Force to make rapid adjustments meeting the new strategic demands.

The NDS articulates a vision for the Department to develop, design, and manage our forces – linking our operational concepts and capabilities to achieve strategic objectives. This requires a Joint Force that is lethal, resilient, sustainable, survivable, agile, and responsive. China and Russia continue to pose the greatest risk to our Nation, driving the need to modernize our strategic Triad.

28. The 2022 NDS integrates the Nuclear Posture and Missile Defense Reviews as part of an overall “integrated deterrence” strategy. What would successful implementation of the 2022 NDS and its integrated deterrence strategy look like for STRATCOM, in your view?

For USSTRATCOM, successful implementation of the 2022 NDS will result in a shared, Department-wide approach to Integrated Deterrence that enables the planning and execution of tailored deterrence approaches against two nuclear capable near-peer adversaries. This framework will also result in enhanced collaboration with U.S. interagency partners to develop varied means of deterring aggression alongside our Allies and partners. The Department recognizes deterring strategic attack is an enduring requirement throughout peacetime, crisis, and conflict.

29. In your view, are the operational concepts and STRATCOM’s plans to implement them, appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to counter the threats and achieve the national security objectives identified by the NDS?

The Joint Force’s current operational concepts, as well as USSTRATCOM’s plans, are appropriately focused and scoped to achieve NDS objectives at this time. Should our adversaries shift their strategy and/or continue to build capability and capacity, we will need to re-evaluate the currently programmed Joint Force resources.

30. The 2022 NDS lists “deterring strategic attacks against the United States, Allies, and partners” as a priority in its Strategy. In your view what is meant by the term “strategic”?

Strategic attack includes nuclear attack of any scale directed against the U.S. homeland or the territory of Allies and partners, whether on the ground, in the air, at sea, or in space. Our strategy also accounts for existing and emerging non-nuclear threats to include a narrow range of high consequence, strategic-level attacks.

31. If confirmed, what changes or adjustments, if any, would you advise the Secretary of Defense to make in the Department’s implementation of the 2022 NDS?

I have no changes to recommend at this time. If confirmed, I will periodically review and provide any recommendations to the Secretary regarding NDS implementation progress whenever appropriate.

32. If confirmed, what revisions or adjustments would you recommend the Secretary of Defense make to the 2022 NDS as a result of changes in assumptions, policy, or other factors?

I have no changes to recommend at this time. If confirmed, I will periodically review and provide any recommendations to the Secretary regarding NDS implementation progress whenever appropriate.

Nuclear Modernization and the Nuclear Posture Review

The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review states a declaratory policy that “as long as nuclear weapons exist, the fundamental role of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack on the United States, our Allies, and partners. The United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or its Allies and partners.” This is consistent with the long-standing views of multiple administrations.

33. Do you support this policy?

Yes. This policy provides a prudent approach to deterring the range of strategic attacks in a challenging and increasingly complex security environment.

34. Some have argued that instead of “extreme” the word “existential” should be used to describe the circumstances. What are your views on this wording?

I understand that the Nuclear Posture Review working group examined numerous strategies and related declaratory policy approaches in undertaking the 2022 NPR, including those using the term “existential.” The NPR determined that a policy of continued calculated ambiguity focused on “extreme circumstances” was prudent given the current security environment. I support the decision made to select the declaratory policy described in the 2022 NPR.

35. Given the current geopolitical situation with Russia, China, North Korea and other rising nuclear powers would you support at present a “sole purpose” or “no first use” declaratory policy?

No. Implementing a “No First Use” or “Sole Use” policy would have a detrimental effect on strategic deterrence and our extended deterrence commitments to our Allies and partners. A strategy of calculated ambiguity, which is supported by our Allies, is the most effective way to deter Russia, China, North Korea or other nuclear armed adversaries. I understand that the 2022 NPR retains the goal of moving toward a “sole purpose” declaration which will require us to work with our Allies and partners to identify concrete steps that would allow us to do so.

36. In your view, how well do the findings and recommendations of the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review synchronize with the integrated deterrence framework of the 2022 NDS?

The NPR and NDS are fully synchronized as they were developed and published simultaneously.

37. The 2022 NPR did not support a nuclear armed sea launched cruise missile, however, other senior military officers, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the current commanders of STRATCOM and U.S. European Command (EUCOM) have testified that they support continued development of the system. Do you support the continued development of a nuclear armed sea launched cruise missile as a means to deter Russia or China?

U.S. Strategic Command must maintain a range of strategic military options and capabilities to present to the President in the event of a contingency. These options and capabilities must be able to address both current and emerging threats. If confirmed, I will be able to more fully review the range of options within our nuclear Triad and how we can continuously improve our ability to deter and, if deterrence fails, restore deterrence, against our nuclear adversaries. I am aware of differing perspectives regarding the nuclear armed sea launched cruise missile. If confirmed, I will analyze the arguments for and against this program and will provide my best military advice to DoD military and civilian leadership.

38. The 2022 NPR did not support maintaining the B83 gravity bomb to hold hard and deeply buried targets at risk. What are your views on the B83 gravity bomb as a means to hold hard and deeply buried targets at risk?

A comprehensive assessment of our HDBT defeat capabilities was started following the 2018 NPR and further study was endorsed in the 2022 NPR. This work, once concluded, can inform our decision on HDBT defeat capabilities. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing the results and working with DoD to address the operational concerns created by the B83-1 retirement.

39. What are your views on the B61-11 to hold certain classes of hard and deeply buried targets at risk?

The B61-11 gravity bomb is effective against a very specific subset of hard and deeply buried facilities. Retiring the B61-11 requires addressing these targets using other means compatible with modern delivery platforms. These means must be effective across a range of target types and scenarios, and adaptable to meet evolving adversary threats. If confirmed, I look forward to working with DoD to address the operational concerns created by the B61-11 retirement.

40. Are there other nuclear capabilities that should be considered to signal or further deter Russia or China and their growing nuclear arsenals?

Nuclear force structure, capacity and capability must be continuously evaluated to ensure strategic deterrence remains credible in support of integrated deterrence. Any identified nuclear capacity and capability gaps should be addressed as soon as possible to provide the Joint Force an effective military capability able to achieve Presidential objectives and to demonstrate national resolve in response to growing threats.

41. Do you support reducing the alert level of the deployed intercontinental ballistic missile force? Why or why not?

No, I do not support changing our current ICBM alert level. The ICBM force provides the Nation with a responsive, highly reliable, and cost effective deterrent capability which is crucial to the effectiveness of our nuclear Triad. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review affirmed our ICBM alert posture is appropriate and contributes to strategic stability. Any attempt to defeat the hardened and geographically dispersed ICBM force requires an adversary to execute a complex strategic attack consisting of hundreds of weapons. An alert ICBM force reduces any incentives a potential adversary might have to execute a disarming first strike; this cost-benefit calculus enhances deterrence.

42. Do you support the New START Treaty?

I support any diplomatic solution which enhances the security of our nation. To date, New START has contributed to bilateral stability by limiting the offensive strategic arms it addresses. The verification regime provides transparency by delivering tangible information on Russia's strategic capabilities, greatly enhancing our understanding of their force posture.

However, New START does not address Russia's large and growing arsenal of non-accountable nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems. If confirmed, I would stand ready to offer my best military advice as to these capabilities and other relevant aspects of a future agreement.

43. Do you support continued efforts to negotiate a follow-on treaty to New START that would include Russia and China?

I support diplomatic efforts to pursue arms control agreements capturing the full scope of Russian and Chinese nuclear capabilities, including their nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems that are not currently the subject of arms control agreement. Any such agreements must be verifiable, enforceable, and enhance the security of our Nation and our Allies and partners.

44. Do you believe the current program of record is sufficient to support the full modernization of the nuclear Triad, including delivery systems, warheads, and infrastructure?

The current program of record is the absolute minimum USSTRATCOM requires to provide effective strategic deterrence. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) affirms previous NPR findings that the nuclear Triad and the associated nuclear command, control, and communications system remain the most effective way to maintain strategic deterrence against existing and future threats. Stable, consistent, and on-time funding is critical both to sustain the legacy nuclear Triad and to execute nuclear modernization programs on schedule in order to deliver the future nuclear deterrence capabilities required to address rapidly expanding national security threats.

45. Do you believe the current program of record will provide adequate capabilities to meet the challenges posed by growing Chinese and Russian nuclear forces?

The current program of record is the absolute minimum USSTRATCOM requires to provide effective strategic deterrence today. As the threats from Russia and China continue to grow, we must continuously evaluate our nuclear force structure, capacity, and capability to ensure strategic deterrence remains credible and effective. Any identified nuclear capacity and capability gaps should be addressed as soon as possible to provide the Joint Force an effective military capability able to achieve Presidential objectives and to demonstrate national resolve in response to growing threats.

This is a point of continual reevaluation. As the world becomes more diverse and threatening, we must continuously evaluate our nuclear force structure, capacity, and capability to ensure strategic deterrence remains credible. Today, with our current programs of record, we are in a good place. We are modernizing our systems and transitioning our nuclear forces and capabilities to ensure our security. I believe more frequent assessments than the current four-year cycle will be required to ensure we can identify, mitigate, and properly address any gaps in a timely manner, as necessary. If confirmed, I will make a commander's assessment on the entire strategic deterrence portfolio to ensure our requirements are sufficient to address the threat.

46. What are your ideas for working across the Joint Force to mitigate the risk that all three legs of the nuclear Triad will "age out" simultaneously at the end of the 2020s?

Nuclear modernization continues to be a top priority for the Department of Defense. The nuclear Triad has credibly deterred adversaries and assured Allies for more than six decades. To mitigate the simultaneous transition risk, we must maintain and sustain our existing nuclear enterprise until replacement systems are fully fielded. Doing this provides needed Triad flexibility and offsets risks resulting from unanticipated issues or emergent challenges. Where possible, we must pursue every opportunity to accelerate modernization. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department, the Services, and NNSA to mitigate risks across the Triad.

47. Specifically, do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Long-Range Stand-Off weapon and the associated W80-4 warhead?

Yes, development and on-time delivery of the Long Range Standoff (LRSO) cruise missile and its associated W80-4 warhead is essential to maintain an effective and credible air-delivered nuclear deterrent, especially as adversaries deploy advanced digital air-defense systems. The current Air-Launched Cruise Missile was deployed at the height of the Cold War to evade Soviet-era analog defenses and will be nearly 50 years old when LRSO is fielded.

48. Do you support and intend to advocate for the funding, development, and fielding of the Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile weapon system program and the associated W87-1 warhead?

Yes, I strongly support and will continue to advocate for both the Sentinel ICBM and Mk21A/W87-1 Reentry Vehicle (RV) programs. The Air Force continues to successfully execute the Sentinel recapitalization program, which will provide an effective, reliable, and low cost ICBM deterrent for decades into the future. Likewise, the Mk21A/W87-1 program is replacing the aging Mk12A/W78 RV and will deploy as Sentinel's second RV soon after Sentinel achieves Initial Operational Capability.

49. What do you believe is the greatest risk to successful deployment of the Sentinel program?

Sentinel is the largest, most complex ICBM recapitalization program undertaken by the nation since the 1960s. This multifaceted development program will challenge Air Force and industry partners in ways not seen for a generation.

There is no margin left in our legacy Minuteman III ICBM system; Sentinel must deliver on time to avoid any capability gaps in the land-based leg of the Triad. Therefore, the greatest risk to the Sentinel program would be a lack of stable, consistent, and on-time funding, which is critical to fielding this program on schedule.

The Sentinel program has met every acquisition milestone to date, but the program is starting to see follow-on effects from the COVID pandemic. Supply chain issues are making it hard to get materials and hardware on the original forecasted schedule and costs. Additionally, we face challenges in meeting the required ramp increases in contractor workforce and government manpower. Both the Prime contractor and the AF are assessing these challenges and assessing impacts to the program.

The Nuclear Weapons Council has laid out a schedule for modernization of the nuclear weapons stockpile over the next 20 years. This schedule involves multiple warhead life extension and replacement programs, in addition to maintenance of the existing stockpile systems.

50. Is this schedule—and the program priorities it establishes—appropriate in your view?

Yes, the Nuclear Weapons Council stockpile plans provide a prioritized, long-term vision aligned with the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the National Defense Strategy.

51. Are the multiple components of the nuclear modernization plan appropriately sequenced and scoped to meet the operational needs of the STRATCOM commander?

Yes, the multiple components of the nuclear modernization plan are appropriately sequenced and scoped as highlighted in National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) production planning documents for the stockpile and Service delivery system acquisition strategies and plans. Integrated DoD and NNSA priorities for nuclear stockpile, infrastructure, and delivery system modernization programs will continue to meet USSTRATCOM's current and projected operational requirements.

While today's stockpile is safe, secure, and militarily effective, concerns exist as many replacement programs are just-in-time or late to need. Even though the nuclear modernization plan sequences the components in a logical and prioritized manner, stockpile and weapon system modernizations must execute on time to address this concern. Continued stable, consistent, and on-time funding is critical to delivering the future nuclear deterrence capabilities required to address rapidly expanding national security threats.

52. In your view, does the Stockpile Stewardship Program provide the tools necessary to ensure the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile without testing? If not, what tools are needed?

Yes, the Stockpile Stewardship Program relies on state-of-the-art supercomputers, large-scale scientific facilities, and workforce expertise. NNSA advanced science and technology programs enable the nation to sustain the deterrent well beyond projected lifetimes without testing. Continued support for the science, technology and engineering base is crucial for the viability of the Stockpile Stewardship mission.

53. In your view, what priority should be attached to programs to modernize and replace critical infrastructure of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)? On what timeline should these programs be executed, in your view?

Consistent with the NDS emphasis on building enduring advantage, NNSA infrastructure modernization must be prioritized and accomplished now to prevent delays in fielding required capabilities.

54. Do you support the long-standing STRATCOM requirement for NNSA to produce no fewer than 80 plutonium pits per year by 2030?

There is a statutory requirement for NNSA to re-establish a credible pit production capability by 2030 (50 USC 2538a). NNSA has notified Congress this date will not be met. USSTRATCOM supports all ongoing efforts to realize pit production as close to 2030 as is possible. There are three factors driving the need to establish a capability to deliver at least 80 plutonium pits per year to the stockpile: 1) replacement of aging pits in the stockpile; 2) modernization of stockpile systems to enable improved margins, safety, and security; and 3) risk mitigation to address unforeseen technical issues in the stockpile.

55. What do you intend to do to mitigate the risk that, according to the NNSA's own analysis, none of the considered options for plutonium pit production seem likely to meet the 2030 requirement?

Risk mitigation measures include evaluating options to reuse newer legacy pits produced prior to the 1990 Rocky Flats closure. Reuse will allow future stockpile modernization programs to continue near-term. Additionally, expanded scientific studies are planned to better inform on the impacts of pit aging within our primary systems. However, reuse limits opportunities to improve modernized stockpile systems safety, security, and effectiveness and does not address aging issues over the long term.

STRATCOM Readiness

56. How would you assess STRATCOM's current readiness to execute the 2022 NDS and STRATCOM's operational concepts and plans?

In my current position as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander to Commander, USSTRATCOM, I can state from firsthand experience USSTRATCOM is ready to execute its assigned responsibilities. Within Air Force Global Strike Command, we conduct continuous operations in accordance with operational concepts and plans to support the National Defense Strategy. While the aging weapon systems generate readiness challenges, USSTRATCOM remains postured to execute its plans and conduct Joint Force operations. If confirmed, I will assess USSTRATCOM's other mission areas to evaluate ways to further improve its readiness to execute the 2022 NDS and USSTRATCOM's operational concepts and plans.

57. What is your assessment of the risk that STRATCOM has accepted in regard to its readiness to execute operational concepts and plans in furtherance of the 2022 NDS and the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review?

The preponderance of risk in implementing the 2022 NDS and NPR comes in the form of current and future risk. This risk is mitigated via the application of the NDS concept of Integrated Deterrence which relies on all instruments of National power to influence an adversary's decision calculus. We must maintain the readiness of our current fielded forces while protecting the timelines of modernization programs of record.

58. If confirmed, how would you address any gaps or shortfalls in STRATCOM's ability to meet the demands placed on it by the 2022 NDS and the operational concepts and plans that implement the strategy especially with respect to the growing non-strategic arsenal of Russia and the rise of China's nuclear deterrent?

In my current position as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander to the Commander, USSTRATCOM, I have experience balancing the sustainment of legacy systems while continuing to develop modernization programs to meet the demands of the NDS.

If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate whether USSTRATCOM has any gaps or deficiencies in our ability to meet those demands and develop mitigation strategies for identified shortfalls. As the threat environment evolves, including Russia's non-strategic arsenal and China's nuclear capabilities, we will remain aware of any potential USSTRATCOM gaps or shortfalls.

STRATCOM Organization and Missions

STRATCOM's missions have shifted substantially over the last five years, with the transition of U.S. Cyber Command to a unified combatant command, the transfer of the combatting weapons of mass destruction mission to U.S. Special Operations Command, and the stand-up of U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM) as a Unified Combatant Command.

59. Do you believe that the current organization structure of STRATCOM is the most effective means for carrying out its mission?

Yes. As Commander of the Service and Functional Component Command for Air Forces assigned to USSTRATCOM, I am confident the command is properly organized to successfully carry out all UCP-assigned missions. In my Component Commander role, I have had several discussions with ADM Richard regarding his ongoing comprehensive study and assessment USSTRATCOM's organizational structure and processes. This assessment is crucial to maintaining readiness today, while enabling the Command's ability to adapt to the continually evolving threat. If confirmed, I will continue this analysis to ensure USSTRATCOM maintains the leading edge of strategic deterrence and readiness.

60. If confirmed, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of Defense regarding STRATCOM missions, organization, and operations?

If confirmed, I would focus upon optimizing the integration and phasing of USSTRATCOM capabilities across all instruments of National power. To do so, we must continue efforts across the Department, interagency, industry, and academia to rapidly develop and field innovative technologies for the Joint Force. Collaboration will decrease the time it takes to prototype and field these next-generation systems from research labs to the warfighters.

61. What are your views in transferring STRATCOM's missile defense mission to SPACECOM?

The Department must streamline command and control, while removing seams from missions such as missile defense and space domain awareness, and improving the use of high demand multi-mission sensors. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing the close collaboration in this mission area with Commander, USSPACECOM, in matters affecting both Commands, our Nation, and our Allies and partners.

62. What is STRATCOM's long-term role with respect to conventional prompt strike systems as compared to other combatant commands such as U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) or EUCOM?

USSTRATCOM has a long-standing requirement for a highly responsive, non-nuclear global strike capability to hold distant, defended, and/or time-critical threats at risk without crossing the nuclear use threshold. Conventional hypersonic strike weapons (HSWs) directly support the USSTRATCOM's Unified Campaign Plan assigned missions of Strategic Deterrence and Global Strike.

USSTRATCOM is preparing to command and control HSWs the day they are fielded, and the Command is working with other Combatant Commands to establish concepts of operations and mission execution tactics, techniques and procedures. HSWs will bolster the overall strategic deterrence posture by providing senior leadership and Combatant Commands additional strike options to achieve theater and national objectives during all stages of conflict.

63. Do you believe STRATCOM should continue to be responsible for electronic warfare or should it be transferred to another combatant command or as a Chairman's Directed Activity?

Before considering moving the electromagnetic warfare (EW) mission, USSTRATCOM needs to complete the foundational work of organizing and operationalizing EW for the Department to ensure it receives the proper attention that has been lacking for a considerable period of time. To date, the Secretary of Defense directed USSTRATCOM to stand up a 2-star led direct reporting unit responsible for raising the readiness of the Joint Force. Much work remains to be done. If confirmed, I will continue the efforts required to achieve electromagnetic spectrum superiority.

64. If confirmed, what role would you establish for yourself in coordinating with the Commander, SPACECOM, to advocate for space programs critical to missile defense, missile warning, and nuclear capabilities?

If confirmed, I will work directly with Commander, USSPACECOM to advocate for space capabilities supporting all USSTRATCOM's assigned missions, including those capabilities enabling strategic deterrence, nuclear operations (missile warning, protected communications, and nuclear command, control, and communications), joint electromagnetic spectrum operations, global strike, and missile defense.

STRATCOM retains responsibility for the integrity of the Integrated Tactical Warning and Attack Assessment (ITW/AA) System. Yet, U.S. Space Command has assumed responsibility for the ground and space sensors, the Missile Warning Center, and the Combatant Commander's Integrated Command and Control System, which fuses the data from these sensors.

65. Specifically, what would you do, if confirmed, to ensure that these ITW/AA elements of the missile warning mission are not lost or degraded between STRATCOM and SPACECOM?

If confirmed, I will work directly with Commander, USSPACECOM to advocate for ITW/AA capabilities essential to USSTRATCOM's strategic deterrence mission and necessary to address evolving threats. I will also continue to monitor and ensure the integrity of all systems through a set of processes that ensure the resourcing, operational certification, system integration, and end-to-end testing support the ITW/AA system.

66. What long-term role do you see for non-traditional ITW/AA sensors as part of a missile warning architecture?

Efforts to integrate non-traditional ITW/AA sensors are critical to meeting the challenges posed by adversaries. Utilizing all available real-time data provides more accurate and relevant warning data to better characterize threats to the homeland, deployed forces, and Allies worldwide. Non-traditional ITW/AA sensors ensure combatant commanders have the needed information to recommend the most appropriate and proportional response to national leadership.

Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications

In response to a task from the Secretary of Defense in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review, the Commander, STRATCOM, directed the creation of the Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications Enterprise Center, housed under the STRATCOM J6.

67. What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the NC3 Enterprise Center?

As the NC3 Enterprise Lead for the Department of Defense, the Commander, USSTRATCOM is responsible for overseeing and managing day-to-day operations, assessing enterprise risk, defining NC3 enterprise level requirements, and directing enterprise systems engineering and integration. The NC3 Enterprise Center (NEC) brings a Defense-wide view approach to NC3 while designing and developing the next generation of NC3 Enterprise architecture over the coming decade.

68. How will you address the inherent challenge associated with housing a systems engineering and architecture organization within a warfighting combatant command?

The NC3 Enterprise Lead leverages Services' engineering and architecture expertise and associated ties already established by former DISA Joint Systems Engineering and Integration Office. Systems Engineering and Integration (SEI) now reports to the NC3 Enterprise Center (NEC) and their manpower transitioned in October 2020. The NEC's governance structure mitigates any associated challenges.

69. What is your understanding of the relationship between the NC3 Enterprise Center and the Military Services that procure, operate, and maintain various NC3 systems?

Services and Combat Support Agencies (CSAs) remain responsible for delivering the NC3 capabilities needed to execute NC2 operations. If confirmed, as NC3 Enterprise Lead, I will provide the Services and CSAs with overarching NC3 enterprise requirements, engineering, operations, and planning guidance to inform their systems requirements development, resource planning, reporting and engineering.

70. How would disagreement between STRATCOM and the Air Force or Navy on the utility of a particular NC3 system be resolved, in your view? How does the new organization differ from the prior Combatant Command-Service relationship?

Under the new construct, disagreements on the utility of a particular NC3 system will be addressed during regular engagements with the Combat Support Agencies through venues such as quarterly Systems Engineering Authorities Board, semi-annual operational risk management meeting, and annual Deputy's Management Action Group sessions. These additional forums provide multiple opportunities to address any concerns.

Gap identification, requirements, and NC3 capability development responsibilities previously dispersed throughout the Department have been consolidated under the NC3 Enterprise Lead, providing a more focused effort.

71. What is your understanding of the relationship between the NC3 Enterprise Center and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, given its role as the NC3 Capability Portfolio Manager?

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD (A&S)) serves as the NC3 Capability Portfolio Manager and NC3 Principal Staff Assistant with increased responsibilities for resources and acquisition. In this capacity, USD (A&S) supports the NC3 Enterprise Lead by executing day-to-day management of the NC3 portfolio and advising on acquisition, mitigation options and prioritization. The NC3 Enterprise Center's day-to-day efforts within the operations management, enterprise requirements, and next generation divisions provide vital data to USD (A&S) to enable programmatic risk assessment and analysis of current and future enterprise capabilities.

72. What is your understanding of the relationship between the NC3 Enterprise Center and the Defense Information Systems Agency?

As a Combat Support Agency (CSA), Defense Information Systems Agency retains program management of key NC3 infrastructure programs, such as Defense Red Switch Network and Crisis Management System. If confirmed, as the NC3 Enterprise Lead, I will provide the Services and CSAs with overarching NC3 enterprise requirements, engineering, operations, and planning guidance to inform their systems requirements development, resource planning, reporting and engineering.

73. What is your understanding of the continued role of the Council on National Leadership Command, Control, and Communications Systems as it relates to STRATCOM and the NC3 Enterprise Center?

The Council serves as the oversight and synchronization body for the broader National Leadership Command Capability (NLCC) Enterprise, such as Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Continuity of Government (COG) and senior leader communications. The Council makes prioritization decisions among competing NLCC interests. The NC3 Enterprise Lead represents and advocates for the NC3 stakeholders to the Council.

74. In your view, is the NC3 Enterprise Center authorized the appropriate number of people, in the appropriate occupational specialties and skill sets, to accomplish its mission?

Yes, the NC3 Enterprise Center, through the Joint Manpower Validation Board process, has been authorized an appropriate number of billets with the requisite occupational specialties and skillsets. However, full resourcing of validated positions has yet to occur. There are challenges to develop, recruit, and retain necessary talent in Federal service, especially as the private sector competes for the same skills. If confirmed, I will pursue multiple approaches to obtain the required NC3 manpower, to include the recruitment of talent from academia, private-public partnerships, and industry.

75. If confirmed, how would you use your new role to advocate for the modernization of NC3 systems?

NC3 modernization must remain a top DoD priority. If confirmed, I will serve as both CDRUSSTRATCOM and the NC3 Enterprise Lead. Through the authorities of these distinct but related positions, I will work to ensure NC3 capabilities meet national objectives and those capabilities are adequately resourced. I will also continue to work closely with the Joint Staff, Services, and other stakeholders to execute NC3 modernization requirements and advocate for the rapid delivery of threat-based NC3 capabilities to enable our Triad.

76. Do you believe the NC3 Enterprise Center should have a limited systems acquisition capability or demonstration or validation of concepts that normally would not be undertaken by the services?

If confirmed, I would defer on recommending changes in assigned responsibilities until I have had the opportunity to thoroughly evaluate and assess the command's mission effectiveness in the context of an evolving global security environment.

77. What is your unclassified assessment of NC3 centers for cybersecurity of the NC3 system?

The overall cyber mission assurance of the nuclear deterrent remains high due to a mixture of cybersecurity improvements, the isolation of numerous systems, and redundancies within the Nuclear Command and Control System (NCCS). However, with crucial modernization efforts ongoing or planned for many NCCS components combined with adversary interest into our critical nuclear systems, we must continue to strengthen the cyber resiliency of our critical systems to ensure the constant readiness of the Nation's nuclear deterrent.

Nuclear Weapons Council

If confirmed, you would become a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council, together with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Under Secretaries of Defense for Policy, Acquisition and Sustainment, and Research and Engineering; and the Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration.

78. If confirmed, what would be your priorities for the Nuclear Weapons Council?

I support the Nuclear Weapons Council's (NWC) enduring priority to maintain a safe, secure, effective, and ready nuclear capability for the Nation. The Nation now faces a convergence of simultaneous modernization efforts across Triad delivery platforms, weapons, and infrastructure. If confirmed, my priority would be to build upon previous NWC success collaboratively with other principals to ensure the enterprise executes programs on time, within budget constraints, in order to sustain legacy systems and field modernized capabilities.

Additionally, consistent with the NDS assertion that the foundation for deterring aggression is building enduring advantage, I would prioritize development of the necessary modern research and production facilities and retain trained people to sustain the force. The Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile is underpinned by a resilient and responsive production infrastructure and robust science and technology programs. All of these elements are critical to maintaining a safe, secure, and effective deterrent force.

79. In your view, what challenges does the Nuclear Weapons Council face over the next four years, and what would you do to address these challenges?

The next four years mark a critical juncture as we enter a multi-decade period of increased risk to the Triad and across the stockpile. There are comprehensive modernization requirements across the nuclear weapons enterprise addressing aging nuclear weapons stockpile, re-establishing critical nuclear infrastructure capabilities, and executing Service delivery system acquisition programs.

Consistent with the NDS assertion that the foundation for deterring aggression is building enduring advantage, continued success is contingent on building a robust and resilient infrastructure to include plutonium pit production, uranium and lithium processing, and increased non-nuclear production capabilities. Maintaining confidence in our weapons hinges on having the necessary modern facilities and skilled workforce to sustain the deterrent force.

If confirmed, I look forward to participating in executing these responsibilities to ensure USSTRATCOM has a safe, secure, effective and reliable stockpile.

STRATCOM is an integral part of the annual certification process for the safety, security, and effectiveness of U.S. nuclear weapons.

80. Would you recommend any changes in STRATCOM's role in the annual certification process, or the process generally?

If confirmed, I will receive copies of annual assessments from each of the national security laboratory Directors and inputs from USSTRATCOM's team of experts to support the annual assessment letter. This process has proven to be an effective tool for identifying stockpile issues of concern. At this time, I have no recommendations for change.

Nuclear Enterprise Review

In 2014, then-Secretary of Defense Hagel directed a comprehensive review of the DoD nuclear enterprise in response to adverse incidents involving U.S. nuclear forces and their senior leadership. The report included recommendations to address management of personnel, attend to security requirements, increase senior leader attention, promote culture change, and numerous other concerns. The monitoring of the implementation of corrective actions has been transferred from OSD back to the Services. If confirmed, you will be arguably the most visible advocate for the service members responsible for executing STRATCOM's mission.

81. In your view, are the Military Services maintaining appropriate focus on implementing the corrective actions required by the Nuclear Enterprise Review?

Yes. The Services are actively engaged in addressing the items identified from the 2014 nuclear enterprise reviews. The Department chartered a body comprised of members from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Services, Joint Staff, and Combatant Commands to oversee completion of the corrective actions. The Service Secretaries and Chiefs personally participate in update briefings to the Deputy Secretary of Defense on at least an annual basis. This construct ensures continued senior level awareness and involvement.

82. What progress has been made to date to correct the deficiencies identified by the Hagel review?

The Deputy Secretary of Defense-chaired Nuclear Deterrence Enterprise Review Group tracks completion of tasks identified by Secretary of Defense Hagel's comprehensive review. Progress has been made in advocating for modernized nuclear forces, updating security rules to accurately reflect modern threats and weapons system vulnerabilities, and actively engaging nuclear enterprise professionals at all levels to promote a positive culture necessary to field a credible nuclear deterrent.

83. What are the most important tasks that remain to be done, in your view?

We must continue to advocate for the on-time fielding of modernized Triad forces and Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications capabilities and require active engagement from leadership at all levels to prevent repeating past mistakes. Doing so ensures we have a ready force able to meet future challenges.

84. If confirmed, how would you ensure that attention and focus on the morale and welfare of the service members executing and supporting STRATCOM's mission is maintained?

If confirmed, I am committed to engaging all levels of USSTRATCOM and other elements of the nuclear enterprise from operations, maintenance, and security personnel at the unit-level to scientists and engineers at the National Laboratories to ensure a sustainable and effective nuclear deterrent.

Relationship with the Geographic Combatant Commands

- 85. If confirmed how should STRATCOM work with EUCOM to deter Russia and the threat of non-strategic nuclear weapons with respect to NATO and our European Allies? How should STRATCOM work with INDOPACOM to achieve similar objectives with regard to China and U.S. Pacific Allies?**

USSTRATCOM should continue to work very closely with USEUCOM and USINDOPACOM to implement the National Defense Strategy central idea of Integrated Deterrence. If confirmed, I will maintain the already strong relationships between the organizations at all levels. Additionally, I will work diligently to share concepts, plans, and operations, and advocate for the capabilities required to most effectively enhance security of the United States and our Allies and partners.

- 86. More broadly, if confirmed, how will you work with the Commanders of both EUCOM and INDOPACOM to enable theater nuclear planning capabilities?**

If confirmed, I intend to work aggressively to implement National Defense Strategy's central idea of Integrated Deterrence. With regards to planning, I will work closely with my fellow Combatant Commanders to focus efforts integrating and synchronizing global plans, including nuclear planning.

Missile Defense

- 87. What is your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the STRATCOM commander related to missile defense?**

The 2020 Unified Command Plan assigned a broad range of responsibilities to USSTRATCOM which are further elaborated by Department guidance. USSTRATCOM is currently the designated combatant command for leading trans-regional missile defense planning, providing operations support, and advocating for capabilities. As missile threats around the globe continue to expand, these responsibilities will become increasingly important.

- 88. What do you believe to be the appropriate function of the Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense?**

The Joint Functional Component Command for Integrated Missile Defense (JFCC IMD) leads and assesses global missile defense planning in support of USSTRATCOM and regional Combatant Commands (CCMDs). JFCC IMD provides subject matter expertise across the missile defense enterprise in matters of operational support, policy, strategy, joint training, and education.

JFCC IMD also supports advocacy for the warfighters' global missile defense requirements through engagement and partnering with the Missile Defense Agency, other Agencies, Services, CCMDs, and Allies and partners. I believe these functions are appropriate.

89. If confirmed, what role would you anticipate playing in representing the views and advocating for the needs of the Combatant Commanders for missile defense capabilities, and how do you believe the warfighter perspective should inform the U.S. missile defense program?

The Unified Command Plan directs Commander, USSTRATCOM, to advocate for missile defense. USSTRATCOM accomplishes this through a collaborative Warfighter Involvement Process, providing critical warfighter perspective. USSTRATCOM advocates for capabilities needed to successfully execute operational plans.

The United States enjoys a measure of protection against ballistic missile threats from rogue nations like North Korea and Iran, but the threat from Russian and Chinese ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles against U.S. forces, Allies, and the U.S. homeland continues to grow. The 2022 Missile Defense Review (MDR) codified existing policy on missile defense and endorsed follow-on actions to improve U.S. capability.

90. What are your views on the relationship between missile defense and nuclear deterrence?

Missile defense and nuclear deterrence are both critical elements of Integrated Deterrence. The nuclear deterrent is foundational to deterring strategic attack and the use of nuclear weapons against the U.S. and our Allies and partners. Missile defense diminishes adversary confidence that a missile attack against the U.S. or our Allies or partners will be successful.

A robust, credible layered missile defense system, paired with our conventional and nuclear forces, enhances the ability to deter strategic attacks, deny benefits, and impose costs against any potential adversary.

91. If confirmed as Commander, STRATCOM, what priorities would you recommend for U.S. missile defense capabilities for the homeland?

The Department must prioritize the ability to find, fix, and track inbound ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles. Deploying responsive, persistent, resilient, and cost-effective sensor-to-shooter capabilities, combined with a robust command and control network, is required to address the range of emerging threats.

92. Do you believe over the long-term that Hawaii should have a missile defense radar capability based on the growing threat from North Korea?

My understanding is the current programs of record providing defense for Hawaii include capabilities such as Sea-based X-band Radar (SBX), Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) and the Army/Navy Transportable Radar Surveillance (AN/TPY-2).

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the specific missile defense requirements for Hawaii, and will work with the Missile Defense Agency and the Department to see how the current programs of record and future space-based capabilities can best be utilized.

93. Do you believe the current ground-based interceptor fleet is appropriately sized to address potential ICBM threats from North Korea and other rogue nations?

The current Ground Based Interceptors (GBI) fleet has the capability to defend the U.S. from a limited threat from North Korea and other rogue nations. If confirmed, I will support the Missile Defense Agency, fellow Combatant Commands, and the Department to assess and appropriately size the future GBI fleet.

94. Do you support the deployment of the Next Generation Interceptors (NGI) as a means to address the long-term threat posed by North Korea?

I support the development of NGI. If confirmed, I will work with Commander, USNORTHCOM and other stakeholders on the need for the NGI program and other capabilities required to defend the homeland as a means to address the long-term threat posed by North Korea.

95. If the NGI program is demonstrated to be operationally effective, would you support eventually replacing the current Ground Based Interceptors with a common fleet of NGI interceptors?

The Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) is designed to increased performance parameters and provide higher reliability, allowing the U.S. to pace and stay ahead of anticipated North Korean and rogue nation threats. If NGI performs as advertised, I would support a Departmental decision to replace the Ground Based Interceptors.

96. In your view, are there additional steps that DoD could take to improve U.S. and allied defenses against North Korea's missile capabilities?

Integrated Air and Missile Defense coordination, including the critical areas of sensing and threat tracking, plays an important role in improving interoperability while mitigating adversary capabilities. The Department must continue integration efforts with regional partners and Allies to increase technical interoperability, defense burden sharing, and improve command and control for the more efficient use of limited high-demand low-density defensive capabilities.

97. Do you agree that a space-based sensor layer is a required next step to enable a wide variety of missile defense capabilities, including improved tracking and targeting of advanced threats?

Yes. Emerging complex missile threats, such as hypersonic weapons, were designed to evade legacy detection systems through speed, maneuverability, and with relatively lower signatures. A space-based sensor layer would provide launch-to-target tracking, facilitate detection, and support defense against hypersonic missiles.

If confirmed, I will work closely with USSPACECOM and USNORTHCOM to track and target threats to the Nation, and with Missile Defense Agency and Space Development Agency to advance and expand space-based sensors and boost-phase defense capabilities. Our approach must integrate active missile defense and advanced technologies to neutralize missile threats.

98. What are your views on the efficacy of space-based interceptor capabilities?

Space-based interceptors may provide the opportunity to engage offensive missiles when they are most vulnerable – during the initial boost phase of flight, and before countermeasures are deployed. If confirmed, I will engage stakeholders to continue discussions on the cost and technical feasibility of this potential capability.

99. What are your views on the efficacy of boost-phase intercept systems?

Boost-phase intercept concepts have great potential, and the Department has been exploring how to resolve the challenges associated with threat system engagement at this point in the launch sequence. The need for persistent space and terrestrial sensor integration, pursuit of kill technologies like High Energy Laser/Directed Energy, non-kinetic weapons, and the policies permitting rapid engagement, are important to successful boost-phase intercept. If confirmed, I will engage stakeholders in discussions to ensure a thorough examination of these concepts.

100. Has DoD developed and implemented operational concepts, plans, and policies appropriate to the governance and utilization of space-based and boost-phase intercept programs? What would you do to address this issue, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would support the Department's efforts to examine concepts and technologies for both space-based and boost-phase intercept programs. Operational concepts, plans, and policies would be developed in parallel as space-based and boost-phased intercept programs are potentially designed and fielded.

101. If confirmed, what steps would you take to ensure that any missile defense system that is deployed is both operationally effective and cost-effective?

If confirmed, I will work with the Missile Defense Agency, the Services, and Joint Staff to ensure missile defense requirements are met through capability and utility assessments, operationally relevant tests and evaluations, and life cycle cost estimates to enable sustainment and meet mission plans.

Electronic Warfare and Spectrum Operations

STRATCOM is the designated combatant command for synchronizing electronic warfare, as well as for ensuring the warfighter has adequate spectrum resources to conduct operations.

102. What are the major issues associated with joint electronic warfare operations, in your view?

Assured access to, and freedom of maneuver within the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) continues to atrophy. The Department has taken initial steps, such as developing the EMS Superiority Strategy, in order to gain and maintain superiority in a contested and congested electromagnetic operational environment. Presently, joint electromagnetic warfare is rebuilding capability and force structure, but we need to move faster. There is still much to do to have a truly integrated Joint Force; having unitary and dedicated Department EMS operations governance would provide a cohesive and preferred solution.

103. In your view, should STRATCOM be responsible for synchronizing non-kinetic fires for the geographic combatant commanders? If so, how should STRATCOM accomplish this mission?

No. The affected Combatant Commander and the provider of the non-kinetic fires should have synchronization responsibilities.

104. Do you believe the Department has adequate simulation capability to test joint electronic warfare operations?

No. Due to the congested nature of the electromagnetic spectrum, the ability to conduct open-air testing is constrained. There are few ranges where advanced electromagnetic warfare testing can take place; these locations are often forced to cease testing due to unintended interference. These challenges impact the way the Joint Force trains. Despite renewed emphasis and efforts to fund and fix, the Department's simulation capability is still limited. Past Departmental initiatives such as Electronic Warfare Infrastructure Improvement Plan are being fielded on our test and training ranges. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is investigating closed-loop simulation, which may provide the capability needed to conduct such simulations.

105. Do you believe the Department has adequate exercise capability to train the Joint Force electronic warfare threats and operations?

No. As demonstrated in recent exercises, deficiencies continue to be repeated, which range from the lack of the availability of high-end training equipment to the infrequency of training opportunities across the force. Training deficiencies, coupled with shortcomings in Blue force capabilities, contribute to the force's inability to maintain previous EMS advantages. Additionally, free-air ranges are atrophying in both size and transmission authorization. Alternate methods to train the force to operate in a contested and complex EMS throughout all domains must be explored.

106. Do you believe that DoD has adequately integrated electronic warfare operations into its operational plans?

No. While we are making progress in advancing electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) operations, including electromagnetic warfare, across the Department, there is still much work to be done. Integrating EMS into our operational plans requires understanding how EMS operations impact all weapons and systems. Spectrum-dependent systems are the norm now, and how these systems are employed must be carefully planned to account for any countermeasures effect.

107. What are the major spectrum issues facing DoD with regard to its ability to conduct operations?

The spectrum is increasingly constrained by commercial use, limiting the Department's ability to conduct operations against rapidly evolving threats. Wherever possible, we must achieve a balance to advance new virtual approaches enhancing joint electromagnetic warfare capabilities without dependence on open-air spectrum access.

The Department is seeking solutions to provide situational awareness across the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS), and for command and control of offensive and defensive EMS operations, training, and testing across all domains and mission areas.

108. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that the Department continues to have access to the spectrum necessary to train and conduct operations?

If confirmed, I would continue to advocate on behalf of the Department for spectrum access, including microwave, infrared, and ultraviolet bands for training and operations.

We must consolidate departmental efforts to maintain and retain Electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) superiority. This requires joint collaboration on requirements for future EMS/electromagnetic warfare capabilities. The Services should leverage and develop capabilities that are interoperable across the Department.

Evaluating and addressing the impacts of private sector spectrum competition is critical to DoD training and operations. Developing an analytical capability to rapidly assess potential impacts to programs from EMS auctions must be a priority. Additionally, we must engage with other federal agencies to advocate for required spectrum to ensure the Department can operate without interference. The DoD must ensure spectrum access to meet its EMS requirements-based needs.

EMS operations pervade every military domain, across all Joint Functions, and throughout the entire range of military operations. We must properly train and equip the Services and Joint Force to ensure success.

DoD Senior Official Education and Training

109. In your view, do a sufficient number of General/Flag officers and members of the Senior Executive Services (SES) have the advanced training, academic degrees, and expertise in scientific and technical disciplines needed to lead the future Joint Force and the scientific/technical civilian workforce?

Yes. As the threat advances, the future fight will become increasingly technologically complex using interconnected multi-domain architectures, data-based tools, and other advanced capabilities. We must foster the development of senior leaders with insights into the advantages and limitations of these military technologies. If confirmed, I will foster the development of tech-savvy senior leaders.

110. Are the career paths for General/Flag officers and SES with technical skills sufficient to ensure that DoD and its Components can develop capability performance requirements that will counter rapidly changing technological threats, execute complex acquisition programs, and make informed investment decisions? If not, what would you do to address this deficiency, if confirmed?

Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department, Joint Staff, and other stakeholders to ensure senior leaders continue to receive the training, advice, and assistance they need to continue to do so. We must continue to evolve as industry and technology evolves.

111. In your view do current General/Flag officer and SES assignment policies incentivize highly qualified senior leaders to serve in scientific and technical programs? If not, what changes do you believe are necessary to incentivize qualified senior leaders to seek assignment to such positions and duties?

Yes. The Air Force assesses officers with STEM degrees and then provides continual critical thinking and professional leadership development at key increments throughout their career. This continual, targeted development ensures we have a pool of highly qualified and experienced military senior leaders. While we develop senior civilians in a similar manner, we also have the added flexibility to hire some of our SES talent based on unique STEM skills and continue to provide executive leadership education and training courses targeted towards strategic executive competencies. If confirmed, I will work with OSD, Joint Staff, and other DoD stakeholders to ensure our assignment policies continue to incentivize military and civilian executive talent with challenging assignments, developmental opportunities, and key recognition for their significant and lasting contributions to the Department's mission.

112. Are you satisfied that OSD, the Joint Staff, and the Military Services have in place sufficient training and resources to provide General/Flag officers and members of the SES the training, advice, and assistance they need to “play the ethical midfield”? Please explain your answer.

Yes. Sufficient training and resources are in place to provide senior military and civilian leaders the training, advice, and assistance they need to “play the ethical midfield.” The ability to make ethical decisions is identified as a specific Desired Leader Attribute for leaders throughout the military and is foundational to all Joint and Service developmental efforts.

Prevention of and Response to Sexual Assault

113. In your view, are the policies, programs, and training that the Department has put in place to prevent sexual assault and respond to sexual assault when it does occur, adequate and effective?

One sexual assault is too many. If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts to address chain of command accountability, prevent retaliatory behavior, reduce root causes, and foster a culture of dignity, respect, and one that is free from sexual assault and sexual harassment.

I welcome and encourage the institutional changes that are helping to combat sexual assault. I applaud Congress and the Secretary of Defense's efforts to not only address enhancing accountability, but to emphasize climate and culture change, the prevention of sexual assault, and comprehensive and consistent victim care and support.

114. What is your view of the role of the chain of command in maintaining a command climate in which sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated?

The chain of command is essential in establishing the desired climate and culture across the organization. When an organizational culture is established, it starts at the top with not only leading by example, but setting and communicating expectations to leaders at all levels. This establishes a standard of accountability that will bring forth and inspire positive change in culture to all military units to make a better force for all Service members.

Building trust is foundational, and our climate must be welcoming and inclusive where everyone feels a part of the team and is treated with dignity and respect, no matter their role.

If confirmed, I will continue to set expectations for professional environments free of persistent and corrosive problems like sexual assault and harassment and require leaders at all levels to do the same.

In order to be a prepared and ready force for the future threat environment, our Airmen, Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, and Guardians must be in a workplace of dignity and respect. I am serious, it is vital to the Nation that our Service members perform their missions in healthy and inclusive environments, nothing else will be tolerated.

115. If confirmed, what role will you establish for yourself in increasing focus on the *prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault*?

Commanders must build climates where trust, respect, and inclusion are the norm. . The recent reforms to the military justice system strike the right balance of preserving a commander's role in good order and discipline, while providing commanders and the Service members they lead with specialized personnel outside of the chain of command, to address accountability for sexual assault and sexual harassment. Every Commander, starting at the top, must build trust with Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Guardians, and civilian professionals. If confirmed, I will require every leader be part of a culture that emphasizes dignity and respect. I will hold leaders accountable allow permissive environments for behaviors that are not consistent with the culture of dignity and respect our personnel deserve.

116. What is your view of the necessity of affording a victim both restricted and unrestricted options to report a sexual assault?

I fully support both restricted and unrestricted options for reporting sexual assault. These options allow victims to control how they want to seek accountability and how they are afforded the best, tailored support to help them through the trauma of sexual assault with needed medical care, counseling, and support.

117. What is your assessment of the Department's implementation of protections against retaliation (including reprisal and social ostracism) for reporting sexual assault?

No Service member should have to fear retaliation for reporting a sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Just recently, the Department has issued a policy aimed at improving how we document and assist survivors, employees, witnesses, and other people who perceive retaliation associated with sexual assault. The Department has also started using the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Database to document these cases more consistently across the Department. In addition, there is a new integrated prevention workforce that will focus on retaliation prevention through command climate assessment and action planning as well as other prevention activities.

We also inform individuals on what to do if they believe they are experiencing retaliation, including informing them to go directly to the DoD Inspector General or providing them with more information about available help and reporting avenues from their Sexual Assault Response Coordinator.

We will continue to analyze our climate data over time to ensure that we are trending in the right direction where victims feel safe to report without fear of retaliation. If confirmed, I will ensure USSTRATCOM complies with all Department programs and directives, beginning with leaders across USSTRATCOM's forces taking a central role in ensuring personnel are trained on the sexual assault reporting protections against retaliation, reprisal, and social ostracism.

118. In your view, do military and civilian leaders in STRATCOM have the training, authorities, and resources needed to hold subordinate commanders and supervisors accountable for the prevention of and response to sexual harassment and sexual assault? If not, what additional training, authorities, or resources to you believe are needed, and why?

We are taking action to ensure that we are fostering an environment of dignity and respect for all personnel. Preventing sexual assault and sexual harassment is a priority for the Department. We will not compromise on this issue and we will not rest until we get this right.

My assessment is that USSTRATCOM has the proper training, authorities, and resources for prevention and response, but it is a continual process of reviewing the data to ensure we are trending in the right direction. Leaders and supervisors are responsible for establishing and maintaining a professional culture and climate where offenders are held appropriately accountable and victims get the restorative care and support they need.

If confirmed, I will continuously evaluate whether leaders across USSTRATCOM forces have the right tools, training, and resources, and when necessary, assess whether those leaders are being held accountable for their individual unit's prevention and response.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.