

**Advance Questions for General Lloyd J. Austin, III, U.S. Army  
Nominee for Commander, U. S. Central Command**

**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.**

**Q: Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions?**

The Department has made great progress in the joint arena since the enactment of Goldwater-Nichols. The Services and Joint competencies have proven their effectiveness and capabilities in more than a decade of war. While there is no room for complacency, I don't believe there is a need for any major modifications to the Act.

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

I do not believe there is a need for any major modifications to the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Beyond the Act, however, Congress may want to look at ways to increase integration of non-military agencies in appropriate training and force readiness environments in order to build a more effective whole of government approach to crisis prevention and resolution.

**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. Other sections of law and traditional practice, however, establish important relationships outside the chain of command. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), to the following officials:**

**The Secretary of Defense**

Subject to direction from the President, the Commander, US Central Command performs duties under the authority, direction and control of the Secretary of Defense. In addition, the Commander, US Central Command is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the preparedness of the command to carry out its missions.

**The Under Secretaries of Defense**

Commander, US Central Command coordinates and exchanges information with the Under

Secretaries of Defense as needed to set and meet US Central Command priorities and requirements for support.

### **The Assistant Secretaries of Defense**

Commander, US Central Command coordinates and exchanges information with the Assistant Secretaries of Defense as needed to set and meet US Central Command priorities and requirements for support.

### **The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President, National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense. Section 163 of title 10, US Code, allows communication between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the combatant commanders to flow through the Chairman. As is custom and traditional practice, and as instructed by the Unified Command Plan, I would communicate with the Secretary through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I anticipate a close dialogue with the Chairman on all significant matters.

I would communicate and coordinate with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as required and in the absence of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

### **The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs**

The Secretaries of the military departments are responsible for the administration and support of forces assigned to the combatant commands. Commander, US Central Command coordinates closely with the Secretaries to ensure that requirements to organize, train and equip forces for Central Command are met.

Commander, US Central Command communicates and exchanges information directly with the Service Chiefs to facilitate their responsibility for organizing, training and equipping forces. Successful execution of the US Central Command mission responsibilities requires close coordination with the Service Chiefs. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Service Chiefs to understand the capabilities of their Services to clearly communicate to them the CENTCOM theater's requirements and to ensure effective employment of the Services' capabilities in the joint and coalition execution of the US Central Command mission.

### **Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command**

Commander, US Central Command maintains a unique relationship with Commander, US Special Operations Command, due to the volume of collaboration required to successfully execute missions within the Area of Responsibility. Our relationship, like those with other combatant commanders, is critical to the execution of our National Military Strategy and characterized by mutual support, frequent contact and productive exchanges of information on key issues.

### **The other combatant commanders**

Commander, US Central Command maintains a close relationship with other geographic and functional combatant commanders. These relationships are critical to the execution of our National Military Strategy and are characterized by mutual support, frequent contact and productive exchanges of information on key issues.

**Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghanistan/ Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan**

Commander, US Central Command maintains operational control (OPCON) over US forces assigned to NATO-ISAF in his role as the Commander, US Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) which is CENTCOM's current main effort and top priority for mission support. For forces further assigned from USFOR-A to NATO-ISAF, this OPCON authority is largely transferred to Joint Forces Command Brunssum and Supreme Allied Commander Europe as "NATO-OPCOM." Thus mission direction for NATO-ISAF is a shared responsibility between USCENTCOM and SACEUR chains of command. For this reason we moderate any interactions with Commander NATO-ISAF by close coordination with Commander JFC Brunssum and SACEUR.

**The respective U.S. Chiefs of Mission within the CENTCOM AOR**

Commander, US Central Command maintains a close working relationship with all US Ambassadors to countries in the CENTCOM region. We coordinate carefully to ensure that operational and security cooperation activities remain consistent with each Ambassador's priorities and Mission Strategic Plan as needed to ensure unity of effort between US military and other US government activities in the CENTCOM region.

**The respective U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés (SDO/DATT)**

Commander, US Central Command is in the rating scheme for Defense Attachés and maintains close relationships and coordination with Senior Defense Officials. The commander relies on the SDOs to provide the information necessary to ensure that CENTCOM's security cooperation activities stay in-step with each Ambassador's priorities and Mission Strategic Plan.

**Qualifications**

**If confirmed, you will be entering this important position at a critical time for CENTCOM.**

**Q: What background and experience do you have that you believe qualifies you for this position?**

Over the course of my 37-plus years serving in the U.S. military, I have commanded at every level, to include at the Corps and Theater levels. I spent much of the past decade commanding forces throughout the CENTCOM region. At the 2-star level, I commanded 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Task Force-180 in Afghanistan. At the 3-star level, I commanded Multi-National

Corps-Iraq. Most recently, as Commander of US Forces-Iraq, I commanded all forces in that country and oversaw the successful transfer of responsibilities to the Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. State Department representatives, as well as the transition of military forces and equipment out of Iraq. I have worked closely with partners from across the Interagency and have existing relationships with civil and military leaders throughout the CENTCOM AOR. My past experiences have afforded me an in-depth understanding of the nuanced challenges and opportunities that exist in that region of the world. I also served previously as Director of the Joint Staff and as CENTCOM Chief of Staff. These experiences have provided me with an understanding of the command as well as some of the relationships and processes that exist at the highest levels.

### **Major Challenges and Opportunities**

**If confirmed as the Commander of CENTCOM, you will be responsible for all military operations in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.**

**Q: In your view, what are the major challenges and opportunities that would confront you if you are confirmed as the next Commander of CENTCOM?**

The Middle East represents an extremely complex and dynamic environment. Ethnic, sectarian and ideology-based conflicts are continuing to play out within countries and between countries across the region. Challenges abound; as do opportunities. Among the many challenges we are faced with is the significant threat posed by violent extremist organizations. Our priorities in the near-term are 1). Afghanistan—we must continue to support the mission, with some ~66K service members still serving in country; 2). Iran—we want to see a non-nuclear Iran that respects its neighbors; 3). Syria—we would like to see an end to the civil war and a stable government; and, 4). The broader Middle East—we want a region where stability and security prevails; we want the conditions set to allow for economic growth and opportunity; and, representative government that is underpinned by rule of law. In general, we want a region where all states play a constructive role in managing and maintaining stability. Our key opportunities lie in the domain of collective security and building regional partners' security capacities. Many of our partners in the region have shown interest and made steady progress to date in taking on their share of regional security. We will continue to encourage this interest and capacity building across the region.

**Q: If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges and opportunities?**

I will address these challenges and opportunities using four principle levers: military to military engagements, plans and operations, security cooperation programs and posture and presence. US Central Command will employ these levers always focused on working by, with and through our partners to the greatest extent allowable to bolster regional security and promote stability. Military to military engagements lay the foundation for and bolster our broader diplomatic and political relationships. It is often the bedrock of the relationship and affords us the trust necessary to dialogue quietly about contentious issues. Plans and operations are developed and

executed in conjunction with our fellow Combatant Commands, interagency organizations and international partners as necessary to address developing contingency and crisis situations. Security Cooperation Programs build partner capacity as the responsible way to reduce US presence in the region and effectively support their ability to carry more of the region's security burden. Posture and presence in the future will be leaner but supported by a base infrastructure that enables rapid reinforcement.

**One challenge with which you may have to deal, if confirmed, is the impact of the combination of Sequestration and the Continuing Resolution on the ability of the Military Services to meet the demands of the Combatant Commanders as well as the execution of your operating budget. Admiral Winnefeld, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was recently quoted as saying, "We are taking a very close look at how we 'appetite suppress' some of the demand signals that are out there," he said. "We find that there are some forces out there in the world today that have been asked for and have been provided to (combatant commanders) that might be servicing a lower level of interest."**

**Q: What is your understanding and assessment of the impact of pending Defense budget cuts to CENTCOM's operational planning, requests for forces, and operating budgets? If confirmed, how would you prioritize the use of available funds?**

All Service Chiefs have been clear and consistent in saying that sequestration will have devastating impacts on operations. That said, they've also been clear in stating that they will continue to support the ongoing operations in Afghanistan, first and foremost. But, there is shared concern about the impact of cuts on the readiness of forces responding to emerging contingencies. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Military Service Components to address any concerns they have with meeting our high priority operational requirements. I will also defend the authorities which support our strategic partnerships which are vital to our ability to promote regional security and stability throughout the region.

**Q: In your opinion, what are your considerations or alternatives if an adequate aircraft carrier presence in the Gulf cannot be sustained by the Navy beyond March 2013?**

The prudent measure is to maintain continuous aircraft presence in the Arabian Gulf region, with two carriers in assessed periods of heightened risk. Maintaining a credible naval force in the region covered by sufficient aviation combat power is essential for demonstrating an enduring commitment to regional partners, building trust and relationships, and the rapid projection of power in a crisis. While naval and air component commanders continue to work alternative strategies to deliver combat power in the Arabian Gulf from a single carrier positioned outside of the Gulf, these alternatives are predicated upon uninterrupted access to overseas bases and facilities.

**Q: If Sequestration were to occur, what would be your assessment of the level of risk to the U.S. national security objectives in the CENTCOM AOR?**

Sequestration would significantly increase the risk to ongoing missions in the CENTCOM AOR. Certainly we can expect that if sequestration occurs those units that are required to address emerging challenges will be less ready than in the past or have less capability. While the effects of sequestration will negatively impact all of the services and combatant commanders, sequestration will arguably have the greatest operational impact on the CENTCOM AOR due to geography, the pace of ongoing combat operations and the likelihood of numerous contingencies.

### **Defense Strategic Guidance**

**The Defense Strategic Guidance, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense”, announced by President Obama on January 5, 2012, includes, among other things, the intention of the Administration and the Pentagon to “rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region.” In his associated remarks, Secretary Panetta explained that the “U.S. military will increase its institutional weight and focus on enhanced presence, power projection, and deterrence in Asia-Pacific...At the same time, the United States will place a premium in maintaining our military presence and capabilities in the broader Middle East.”**

**Q: What do you anticipate will be the impact of this guidance on the operations and activities of CENTCOM?**

The guidance does increase emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region while enhancing U.S. technological capabilities in the PACOM area of responsibility (AOR). However, our Defense Strategic Guidance reflects a global strategy. And, the world we live in remains complex and extremely volatile. In fact, much of the instability resides in the CENTCOM AOR where significant challenges persist. While I understand that in an era of constrained resources we must prioritize; the combatant commander is responsible for ensuring that, at all times, the command is postured to protect vital national interests in the region. If confirmed, I will continue to assess conditions in the CENTCOM AOR and request the resources required to sustain operations.

### **Readiness of Forces**

**Q: What is your assessment of the readiness of U.S. forces that have been deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom?**

Our forces are the best trained, best equipped and most experienced in our Nation’s history; and, that includes forces deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Pre-deployment training at the various joint training centers provides tailored counterinsurgency scenarios and incorporates up-to-the minute lessons learned from troops on the ground in Afghanistan. I have worked hard in my current position as Vice Chief of Staff of the Army to ensure that all levels of command are appropriately focused on ensuring the continued and future readiness of US forces in theater.

**Q: Have you observed any significant trends in or apparent gaps with respect to**

**personnel, equipment, or training readiness in units as they deploy to or upon their arrival in Afghanistan?**

No. Overall, the readiness of units arriving in the AOR has been high and the Services have done well preparing units to deploy. Where issues have arisen, the Services have been adaptive and they have routinely incorporated feedback from theater thereby making necessary adjustments in force preparations.

**Q: What are your views, if any, on the growing debate over whether U.S. forces are putting too much emphasis on preparing for counterinsurgency and irregular warfare operations or too little emphasis on preparing for high intensity force-on-force conflict and full spectrum operations?**

This debate reflects how the U.S. military has adapted over the past decade-plus of war. Army doctrine reflects this adaptation, stating that our formations must be capable of performing unified land operations across a broad range of operations: offense, defense, stability, and defense support to civil authorities. There is a recurring dialogue between commanders at all echelons to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the essential tasks that must be trained. The commanders' assessment of the situation, mission, time, and resources drives how commanders execute unit training and preparation. Ultimately, this is a dynamic process. It is at the heart of the military's efforts to build and sustain readiness, and it ensures that our formations are capable of accomplishing the mission across the full range of operations.

**Q: What is your opinion on adding a third maneuver battalion to the Brigade Combat Team structure?**

The addition of the third maneuver battalion will greatly enhance the depth, versatility and combat capability of our Brigade Combat Teams (BCT). Analysis shows that the redesigned BCT will provide equal capacity to meet combat commander demand while providing a more robust formation at the point of decision. The three battalion design is more lethal, survivable and flexible. Importantly, it also increases the commander's options as the formations execute operations across the full range of military operations. Ultimately, the addition of the third maneuver battalion is a key development for the Army as it transitions from current fight and postures for the next conflict.

**Afghanistan Counterinsurgency Strategy**

**Q: Do you support the counterinsurgency strategy for Afghanistan?**

Yes, I support the current approach of 1). building ANSF capacity; 2). countering violent extremist organizations; and, 3). setting conditions for final transfer to ANSF control and change of mission by the end of December 2014.

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

The current strategy is showing progress; and, I have every confidence in the commanders leading the effort. That said, if confirmed, I will continually assess the situation on the ground, consult with US leaders, partners, regional leaders and NATO commanders and provide my best military advice on this matter to my chain of command. I will also follow up with the members of this committee, as requested.

**Q: What is your assessment of the progress of the campaign in Afghanistan?**

Efforts to counter the insurgency and prevent terrorist safe havens have been and remain effective. Coalition operations have continued to focus on degrading insurgent networks while building the capacity of our ANSF partners to maintain security. We were largely successful during the 2012 fighting season and we met our campaign objective to force the enemy out of population centers. We continue to transition the responsibility for security to the ANSF and we have seen a decrease in violence in areas under ANSF responsibility. That being said, challenges remain – particularly in areas along the border with Pakistan and areas in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban continues to operate. There also remain the dual challenges of narcotics and corruption that threaten long term stability. Afghanistan’s nascent government and upcoming elections scheduled for 2014 also pose significant challenges with respect to maintaining the gains achieved in recent years.

**Security Transition in Afghanistan**

**President Obama and Afghan President Karzai recently announced that the transition to an Afghan lead for security throughout Afghanistan will occur this spring, a few months ahead of schedule. As part of the ongoing transition, coalition forces are shifting increasingly to an advise-and-assist mission but will continue to support Afghan security forces until the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission concludes by no later than the end of 2014.**

**Q: Do you support the announced transition of the security lead to Afghan security forces throughout Afghanistan by this spring?**

Yes, I support plans for ANSF assuming the lead for security across all of Afghanistan by mid-2013, as agreed to at the Chicago NATO Summit in May 2012. The current security situation and capability of ANSF supports continued adherence to the transition plan. Afghans have already assumed the lead through much of the country and have validated NATO’s incremental decisions to make these transfers. That said, we will certainly incorporate lessons learned from our experiences in Iraq. Among them we recognize that ISAF will be called upon to provide critical enablers and advisory support to the ANSF as they assume the lead for security operations. ISAF will also be required to maintain sufficient combat power to respond to contingencies and conduct operations alongside the ANSF.

**Q: Do you support the shift in the mission of coalition forces to an increasingly advise-and-assist role in support of Afghan security forces?**

Yes. The current situation supports the shift to an advise-and-assist mission in support of ANSF. If confirmed, I will monitor changing conditions and dialogue with commanders, regional leaders and partners to ensure the situation supports the employment of general purpose forces in a Security Force Assistance (SFA) role. Balanced SFA enables ISAF to provide tailored forces that support sustainable development of the ANSF as they move into the lead, as well as special and general purpose forces to support developing Afghan Army and Police operations through 2014. The ultimate aim is to build ANSF capacity and set conditions for them to assume lead for the security of their country. Much like in Iraq, as the ANSF capabilities and capacity improve, coalition forces will provide less frequent training and advice at the lower levels and focus efforts at the higher echelons to better integrate our enabler support.

**Q: Do you agree that the success of the mission in Afghanistan depends on having Afghan security forces, rather than coalition forces, taking the lead for security and conducting unilateral operations to the maximum extent?**

Yes. History has shown that indigenous forces are best suited to assume lead responsibility for the security of their country. A great deal of the country has already transitioned to ANSF in the lead, and we have seen low levels of violence in these transitioned areas. ISAF will continue to provide critical enablers and advisory support to ANSF formations as they assume lead responsibilities.

**Q: What is your assessment of the capacity and performance of the Afghan security forces in assuming the lead for security in areas designated for transition, including in contested areas?**

Over the past several years, we have helped grow the ANSF into a force that will eventually reach 352K. The ANSF is steadily improving in military capability and professionalism. There is still work to be done before they will be self-sufficient and capable of providing sustainable security for the long term. However, the ANSF is on track to assume full security responsibility across Afghanistan by the end of 2014. During 2012, the Afghan National Army demonstrated their ability to plan, conduct and sustain large-scale operations. Their combat enabler capabilities are still developing due to late fielding, but they are improving in their ability to conduct fire support, rotary wing support and even limited medical evacuation.

**Q: Do you believe that a responsible transition of the mission for U.S. forces in Afghanistan from combat to a support role should be based on conditions on the ground in Afghanistan?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will work closely with leaders in theater, to include General Dunford, to assess the conditions on the ground and provide my best military advice with respect to the transition of mission to my chain of command.

**Q: Under the current conditions in Afghanistan, would you support making such a transition by no later than the end of 2014?**

I support the current plan to complete the transition by the end of 2014, per the President's

policy. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the situation, along with the leaders on the ground, and provide my best military advice on the timeline and related transition requirements.

**Q: What conditions, if any, would drive you to recommend to the President to not transition from a combat to a support role?**

We are transitioning from leading partnered COIN operations to providing Security Force Assistance through training, advising and assisting the ANSF based on the current assessment of conditions on the ground. A number of factors were considered when making the decision on pace and course of our transition efforts. Indeed, it would be difficult to name a single factor that would drive a commander to recommend a change to the current plan. If confirmed, I will continue to assess conditions on the ground and provide my best military advice to my chain of command.

### **Draw Down of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan**

**In September 2012 the drawdown of the 33,000 U.S. surge force in Afghanistan was completed, bringing U.S. troop levels down to approximately 68,000. President Obama recently reaffirmed his pledge to continue the drawdown of U.S. forces from Afghanistan at a steady pace. He also stated he would soon announce the next phase of the U.S. drawdown based on the recommendations of the ISAF Commander and other commanders on the ground in Afghanistan.**

**Q: What is your understanding of the missions to be conducted by any residual U.S. force that may remain in Afghanistan after 2014?**

My understanding of the missions to be conducted by residual U.S. Forces remaining in Afghanistan after 2014 will be counterterrorism; train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF); and provide support to Department of State (DOS) civilian missions. Most importantly, force protection is inherent in everything we do in theater.

**Q: In your current position as Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, have you provided any recommendations on the size and missions of any residual U.S. force that may remain in Afghanistan after 2014?**

No.

**Q: Based on your experience as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and your experience in the Iraq drawdown, what missions and force size do you recommend for a residual U.S. force in post-2014 Afghanistan?**

I am not currently in a position to provide such a recommendation. I would defer to the current CENTCOM commander and the commander on the ground to provide their recommendations.

**Q: In your view, how should the requirement to provide force protection for our**

**troops be taken into consideration in any decision on the size of a residual U.S. force in Afghanistan post-2014?**

Force protection is an inherent part of everything we do and therefore must be included in the planning effort.

**Q: How does the early transition to Afghan lead for security announced by Presidents Obama and Karzai impact our mission and objectives for the 2013 and 2014 fighting seasons?**

The transition is and has always been conditions and capability based. The early transition announcements reflect the improving security situation in Afghanistan and ANSF's capabilities to assume the lead and should have no impact on our mission objectives.

**Q: What force structure do you think is appropriate for the 2013 and 2014 fighting seasons?**

If confirmed, I will assess the force structure capabilities and capacities that we will maintain over the next two years to ensure they continue to meet our objectives. We will transition to full security lead by the Afghans in the spring and we will need to ensure that we have set the proper conditions for successful elections in 2014. We will also need to ensure that we have the proper forces to smoothly transition to the train, advise and assist mission by December 2014.

**Q: What, in your view, should be the pace of reductions in U.S. forces during each of 2013 and 2014?**

This is an operational maneuver. As such, the pace of reductions should be based on the commander's assessment, the enemy situation, conditions on the ground, to include ANSF capabilities, and mission requirements in order to maintain the campaign's momentum and to avoid jeopardizing the gains we have made. At the same time, we must be clear that we will not abandon Afghanistan. This is a decisive time in the country's history and decisions we make now regarding degrees of support, how the U.S. drawdown proceeds, to include the preservation of enablers in terms of logistics, medical evacuation, communications and air support will be essential for our partners.

**Logistical Challenges**

**Q: What is your assessment of the speed and reliability of logistical convoys through the Pakistan Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) to support our forces in Afghanistan?**

Movement in Pakistan is subject to a number of recurring challenges including environmental conditions, political factors and the ongoing security situation. We have cleared out nearly all cargo previously stranded in Pakistan as a result of the closure that began in November of 2011, and we recently commenced test shipments of new cargo. We anticipate challenges as the

Government of Pakistan (GOP) struggles internally to implement new transit processes that were agreed to during 2012. The GOP appears committed to resolving these issues and facilitating successful, sustained cargo movement. It is our intent to use the PAK GLOC consistent with route capacities, GOP capabilities, the security situation, and environmental conditions.

**Q: In your view, what improvements, if any, need to be made in light of the logistical throughput rate of the Pakistan GLOC?**

The current proven capacity of the PAK GLOC will support the volumes that we anticipate being shipped via Pakistan. Infrastructure improvements are not required to support anticipated volumes, but may provide a positive impact supporting longer term nation building, transit and trade in the region.

**Q: To what extent has CENTCOM developed a common operating picture to improve its processes for tracking equipment and supplies in Afghanistan?**

CENTCOM leverages both automated systems of record and manual reporting processes to obtain a common picture of equipment and supplies in Afghanistan. In addition, CENTCOM is partnering with the Joint Staff and TRANSCOM to develop a common operating picture to track the end-to-end retrograde process.

**General Austin, you served as the Commanding General of United States Forces – Iraq during the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq consistent with the 31 December 2011 deadline in the U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement.**

**Q: Taking into account your experience in Iraq, what are the biggest risks and mitigation strategies associated with drawing down U.S. forces from Afghanistan and retrograding military equipment to the United States?**

The geographic and topographic complexities of Afghanistan will make the retrograde of materiel and personnel very challenging. The largest risk to retrograde operations is the threat of disruption to PAK GLOC and the Northern Distribution Network operations. To mitigate this risk, the CENTCOM Materiel Recovery Element (CMRE) was established to increase both volume and velocity of retrograde efforts. Transition and retrograde will also need to be conducted while contending with an able and determined enemy. As the size of our footprint shrinks, force protection and availability of enablers will increase in importance.

**Q: How do you intend to address any conflicts between the objectives of mission accomplishment in the 2013 and 2014 fighting seasons and the logistical challenge of drawing down forces and retrograding military equipment?**

The accomplishment of our mission in 2013 and 2014 fighting seasons will be inextricably linked to the imperative of drawing down forces and retrograding equipment. The drawdown and retrograde are in themselves significant military operations that must be fully nested within the ground tactical plan and plans for operational maneuver. Fighting season considerations, force levels and retrograde actions cannot be considered in isolation. The ground commander

must plan operations, assess risk and mitigate conflicts as a whole to ensure all efforts within theater are nested and synchronized.

### **Status of Forces Agreement for Afghanistan**

**As called for in the Enduring Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in May, the United States and Afghanistan are holding talks on a Bilateral Security Agreement, which will provide essential protections for any limited U.S. military presence in Afghanistan after 2014.**

**Q: Do you agree that it is essential that any status of forces agreement for U.S. military forces in Afghanistan after 2014 provide immunity for U.S. troops from prosecution in Afghan courts?**

Yes. Exclusive jurisdiction is an essential requirement.

**Q: If confirmed, would you recommend that the United States withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan if those forces do not have such immunity?**

Yes. Without jurisdiction over our troops, our activity in Afghanistan must be limited to traditional security assistance. Combat and training activities cannot be conducted without this protection.

**Q: Based on your experience in the Iraq drawdown, what are the risks associated with removing all U.S. military forces from Afghanistan?**

Removing all US military forces threatens the achievements gained in Afghanistan over the last 12 years of sustained combat. Such a withdrawal could open the door to a return of Al Qaeda, collapse of the GIRoA and lead to increased instability in the region. Also, it could delay the maturation of Afghan forces at a critical point in their development.

### **Afghanistan National Security Forces**

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

ANSF operational effectiveness continues a general upward trend as they continue to improve and professionalize. The ANSF have increasingly taken the lead in areas previously secured by U.S. surge forces, and have been able to expand their reach, occupying patrol bases and combat outposts that had previously been too dangerous to hold. The ANSF have also increased their abilities to plan, carry out, and sustain high-level kinetic actions involving multiple ANSF forces.

**Q: What is your assessment of the capacity of the ANSF to take the security lead and to conduct unilateral operations?**

The ANSF have made substantial progress during the past year, and are steadily building a force that will assume full responsibility for security operations throughout Afghanistan by the end of 2014. The ANSF are unilaterally conducting the vast majority of operations in Afghanistan, although many of these are routine patrols. Force generation and development efforts continue to yield advancements in operational effectiveness. During the previous year, ANSF made strides in performance, increasingly moving into the lead for security operations. As of the end of the last reporting period, ANSF partnered with ISAF on more than 90 percent of all operations and was in the lead in more than 50 percent of these actions.

**Q: 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?**

There are five key challenges to building the capacity and capability of the ANSF: leadership, logistics, counter-IED, attrition and literacy. Counter-IED continues to pose a significant challenge. Attrition rates have improved; however, we must continue to monitor levels. We must also continue to help the ANSF to professionalize the force; train and develop leaders; build their enabler capacity; and, further expand literacy which will have a lasting impact on the country. If confirmed, I will work closely with General Dunford to ensure that he has the resources necessary to develop a sufficient and sustainable ANSF that can operate independently of Coalition assistance.

**Q: Do you support plans for building and sustaining the ANSF at 352,000 personnel?**

Yes. The target end-strength provides the capacity for achieving security and stability in Afghanistan.

**Q: 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?**

Yes. A sufficient and sustainable ANSF is necessary for Afghanistan's long-term stability and security. The current ANSF sustainment plan will maintain Afghan forces at surge strength of 352,000 through 2018, to allow for continued progress toward a sustainable secure environment in Afghanistan. As security conditions on the ground continue to improve, ANSF will undergo a gradual, managed force reduction to a final force structure that is both adequate to meet security requirements and fiscally sustainable in the long term.

### **Insider Threat**

**In 2012 the number of so-called "green-on-blue" incidents, in which ANSF personnel or ANSF impersonators attacked U.S. or coalition soldiers, increased significantly. The rise in the number of insider attacks has led U.S. and Afghan military leaders to take a number of precautions against such insider threats, including expanding Afghan counterintelligence**

**efforts to identify possible Taliban infiltrators, increasing cultural sensitivity training, and expanding the “Guardian Angel” program to protect against the insider threat in meetings between coalition and Afghan forces.**

**Q: What in your view are the causes of the increase in insider attacks and what has been their impact on the military campaign in Afghanistan?**

Insider attacks are an insurgent tactic designed to create a seam and sow mistrust between ISAF and ANSF forces. Most likely the increase in insider attacks reflects a combination of factors including the increase in the number of ANSF personnel and a greater number of Coalition Force (CF) trainers living and working with the ANSF. Overall, these attacks, while tragic, have not had a significant impact on the campaign.

**Q: What is your assessment of the impact of these green-on-blue attacks on the level of trust between coalition and Afghan forces?**

Clearly these types of attacks have the potential to impact morale and to compromise bonds among coalition members. However, during my recent visit to Afghanistan I did not see indications of either low morale or mistrust among coalition and Afghan forces.

**Q: What is your assessment of the measures that have been taken by ISAF and Afghan leaders to address the insider threat? Are there additional steps that you would recommend to address this threat, if confirmed?**

Since January 2012, there has been a significant increase in the ISAF and ANSF efforts to mitigate insider attacks. In August 2012, ISAF and the ANSF forces formed the Insider Threat Action Group (ITAG) and the Insider Threat Mitigation Team (ITMT) to jointly identify and implement insider threat mitigation efforts. Steps are being taken by Afghans to institute a number of insider threat countermeasures and supplement the vetting process in order to remove undesirable members of the ANSF. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander, ISAF, to ensure appropriate measures are being taken and the necessary resources allocated to protect coalition forces.

**Q: In light of the spike in insider attacks, do you see a need to reconsider current plans for embedding small Security Force Assistance Teams of U.S. military advisors with Afghan military units to assist in the transition to an Afghan security lead?**

Presently, no; but, this is a critical question and if I am confirmed, I will work with General Dunford as conditions warrant to evaluate the potential risks to our embedded advisors as transition progresses.

## **Reconciliation**

**Q: In your view, what should be the role of the United States in any reconciliation**

## **negotiations with the Afghan Taliban and other insurgent groups?**

Achieving a durable peace in Afghanistan will require some form of political settlement among Afghans. That settlement must ultimately be brokered among the Afghans themselves. Afghanistan is adamant that the Afghan government must maintain control of any reconciliation negotiations. The U.S. role should acknowledge that the Afghanistan government is the lead for reconciliation and focus on acting as a mediator and encouraging other nations to play a constructive role.

### **Q: What additional steps, if any, should the United States be taking to advance the reconciliation process?**

The U.S. could work to bring other key AOR partners with a vested interest in securing a stable Afghanistan into the reconciliation dialogue to offer their assistance in support of the peace process.

### **Q: In your view, what should be the role of Afghanistan's neighbors, in particular Pakistan, in the reconciliation process?**

Neighbors in the region have legitimate interests in Afghanistan and need to play a constructive role in the reconciliation process. Specifically Pakistan must take steps to ensure that militant and extremist groups cannot continue to find safe haven in Pakistani territory. It should actively support the Afghan-led process. Ultimately, Pakistan and the other regional neighbors will benefit from improved stability in Afghanistan.

## **Special Operations in Afghanistan**

**Special operations forces depend on general purpose forces for many enabling capabilities, including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); logistics; and medical evacuation. Admiral McRaven, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, has said "I have no doubt that special operations will be the last to leave Afghanistan" and has predicted that the requirement for special operations forces may increase as general purpose forces continue to be drawn down.**

### **Q: If confirmed, how would you ensure adequate enabling capabilities for special operations forces as general purpose forces continue to draw down in Afghanistan?**

If confirmed, I will work with SOCOM to assess SOF enabling requirements and source them with existing CENTCOM assets or through the request for forces (RFF) process.

**The find-fix-finish operational model is greatly enhanced by opportunities to capture and interrogate enemy personnel, but that capability may be eroded as the U.S. military and intelligence footprint is reduced. An inability to mount capture operations could lead to a greater emphasis on lethal actions, potentially affecting public opinion.**

**Q: What long-term risks are imposed on counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan as a result of fundamental changes in the operational environment for SOF?**

As Coalition and U.S. SOF are reduced in size and scope with the drawdown, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) will play an ever-increasing greater role in counterterrorism. U.S. and Coalition operational risk is reduced as these forces step back and settle into a train, advise and assist capacity. Long-term strategic risk lies with the capability and capacity of ANSF SOF to efficiently and effectively execute counterterrorism. However, this risk is also reduced through adequate ANSF SOF training and with the provision of adequate operational enablers to ANSF SOF.

**Last April, the U.S. and Afghanistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the “Afghanization” of direct action counterterrorism missions in Afghanistan, which reflected the shared intention of having Afghan security forces in the lead in the conduct of such operations with U.S. forces in a support role.**

**Q: Why is it important for Afghan Special Operations Forces to be in the lead on night raids?**

As a sovereign nation, Afghanistan certainly should be in the lead in these types of operations. Historically, indigenous forces defeat insurgencies. Successful transition will be characterized by our Afghan partners taking increasing responsibility for the planning and command of these night operations.

**General Allen and others have praised the Village Stability Operations (VSO) and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programs – both U.S. Special Operations missions – as critical elements of the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. However, President Karzai recently stated his position that U.S. forces should withdraw from Afghan villages.**

**Q: What are your views on the value of these programs and do you believe they should be part of the long-term strategy in Afghanistan (i.e. post-2014)?**

Denying adversaries control over populations is essential to prevailing in a contest to establish governance. The VSO and ALP programs have proven effective by enabling local security and re-establishment or re-empowerment of traditional local governance mechanisms. “Bottom-up,” population-focused stability efforts to improve security and development undermine hostile influence and control in contested, strategically important areas. These programs will prove valuable and effective as part of the long-term strategy in Afghanistan.

**Q: What is your understanding of President Karzai’s position with regard to the VSO and ALP programs?**

President Karzai desires an Afghanistan that is protected and secured by Afghans. His support for the VSO and ALP programs hinges on them being Afghan-led, and the traditional “arbaki”

(local militia) aspect of the programs. Support for these programs at the local level has heavily influenced his support for them at the national level.

**Recently, the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Afghanistan (SOJTF-A), was established to improve coordination among U.S., coalition, and Afghan special forces. This new command structure unified, for the first time, command of all capacity building, counterinsurgency, and counterterrorism activities conducted by special operations forces in the country.**

**Q: Do you believe unified command of all special operations activities is important and if so, why?**

Yes. Synchronization and unity of effort among special operations activities is absolutely critical and what a unified command provides. The recent establishment of NATO Special Operations Component Command – Afghanistan, and the Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan (NSOCC-A/SOJTF-A) into a combined organizational structure provides a robust, properly sized and structured headquarters that avoids duplication and ensures the best use of available funding, manpower and infrastructure.

**Q: Do you believe general purpose forces could be assigned to the new Special Operations Joint Task Force, as has been done previously, to augment special operations forces carrying out the Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police programs?**

General purpose and special operations forces are task organized to produce superior results. It is my experience that when different forces work together they achieve outcomes that exceed their capabilities when operating alone.

### **Afghan Public Protection Force**

**Q: What is your opinion of the progress and future prospects for the APPF and its ability to transition all ISAF fixed-site and convoy security missions by March 2013?**

National Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A) assesses that APPF cannot achieve complete transition before September 2014 even though Presidential Decree (PD) 62 requires that all ISAF sites and convoys currently secured by Private Security Companies (PSC) be transitioned to APPF by 20 March 2013. According to PD62, if policy does not change it will be illegal to contract services of PSCs after 20 March 2013. ISAF does not currently have the process or manpower in place to undertake this task and the APPF lacks the capacity to replace all PSC-provided functions at ISAF locations. ISAF is finalizing a contingency plan relating to APPF.

### **No Contracting with the Enemy**

**A year ago, at the request of the Department of Defense, we enacted the “No Contracting with the Enemy Act,” which gives CENTCOM important new tools to ensure that DOD funds do not go to support individuals and entities that actively support the insurgency or actively oppose U.S. or coalition forces in Afghanistan. Earlier this month, DOD officials informed us that little action has been taken pursuant to these new authorities.**

**Q: What is your understanding of the reasons for CENTCOM’s failure, to date, to make aggressive use of the No Contracting with the Enemy Act?**

Based on my experience in Iraq, I understand the importance of preventing funds from getting into the hands of the enemy. If confirmed, I will certainly work to ensure that CENTCOM is in compliance with the “No Contracting with the Enemy Act” provisions.

**Q: What steps, if any, will you take if confirmed to ensure that CENTCOM takes full advantage of the authority provided by Congress to ensure that DOD funds do not go to support individuals and entities that oppose our interests in Afghanistan?**

If confirmed, I will rely on my commanders in Afghanistan and intelligence sources to identify companies or persons that may be subject to the “No Contracting with the Enemy Act.” When presented with evidence of support to the enemy or opposition to the U.S. or Coalition, I will issue findings against those companies or persons in accordance with the authorities granted to me by Congress.

### **Afghanistan Air Force**

**Q: How do you believe the delays and disruptions in programs to buy airlift and light tactical aircraft for Afghanistan’s air force have affected Afghanistan’s ability to accept responsibility for its own security?**

To date, there have been no known short-term impacts. However, as the transition continues, the ANSF will experience more equipment and personnel challenges without planned aircraft enablers. ANSF will be required to rely more on indirect fires and mobile land forces with reduced close air support.

### **U.S. Strategic Relationship with Pakistan**

**Q: What is your assessment of the strategic relationship between the United States and Pakistan? What would you consider to be areas of shared strategic interest between the two countries?**

The strategic relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan remains strained, but is improving. Pakistan’s willingness to cooperate on key U.S. goals has been limited primarily to issues such as counterterrorism and Afghanistan. As such, we have reduced the scope of our security assistance to focus on those areas where our strategic interests overlap, namely counterterrorism

and counterinsurgency capabilities.

**Q: What do you consider to be the major challenges in the U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship?**

Challenges do exist in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. Among them, Pakistan's at-times divergent interests in Afghanistan, its existential fear of India and its nuclear arsenal remain roadblocks to establishing a long-term, strategic partnership. That said, Pakistan is, and will remain important to achieving U.S. goals in the region, especially as we transition in Afghanistan. And, the reality is that most challenges can be managed by exercising strategic patience and taking the long view on the relationship.

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

The overall military-to-military relationship continues to improve and I believe we should seek to continue this trend. The continued importance of the Pakistan military lends credence to the continued provision of security assistance as an important engagement tool for maintaining access and influence. We must continue our "whole of government" approach towards Pakistan to ensure all avenues of engagement remain open.

**U.S. Security Assistance to Pakistan**

**Since 2001, the United States has provided significant security 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 and other support provided in connection with Operation Enduring Freedom.**

**Q: 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?**

Overall, U.S. support to Pakistan has been moderately effective in promoting U.S. interests. At best, our assistance has enabled the Pakistani military to increase its effectiveness against violent extremists. It has also enabled us to sustain mil-to-mil relations. However, the high level of financial support has not fully translated to the desired effects the U.S. anticipated.

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

Putting specific conditions on U.S. assistance helps to ensure that our support to Pakistan furthers U.S. interests. Without such caveats, Pakistan may be tempted to apply our support towards efforts they deem to be in their national interest, which may or may not overlap with ours.

## **Combating Terrorism**

**Q: What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda and its associated forces to the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and Western interests more broadly?**

Despite the immense pressure placed on al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula, the global al Qaeda movement remains resilient. Regional instability in CENTCOM's AOR and evolving security conditions resulting from the Arab Spring are creating opportunities and potential safe havens for the AQ movement. AQ, its affiliates and allies are exploiting weak governments in places like Yemen to gain new footholds, plan attacks against U.S. forces, our interests, those of our Western partners and potentially the U.S. Homeland. AQ's affiliates and allies pose an enduring and persistent threat to the US homeland and Middle East stability and security.

**Q: Within the CENTCOM AOR, what do you consider the highest counterterrorism priorities?**

I believe the counterterrorism priorities are Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, and, in the near-term, Syria. Despite our efforts, the AQ movement remains resilient due to the rapidly changing and emerging geopolitical environment in the Middle East and North Africa. AQ senior leadership in Pakistan will likely retain their safe haven and continue to provide leadership and moral authority to AQ affiliates as US and Coalition Forces withdraw. AQ in the Arabian Peninsula is emerging as the most dangerous of the AQ affiliates and persists as the Yemeni government tries to dislodge the group from its southern Yemen safe haven. AQ in Iraq is reconstituting, increasing attacks meant to destabilize the Iraqi government and incite sectarian conflict. Finally, AQ in Iraq's Syria-based offshoot, the Al-Nusrah Front, is increasing in capability and influence.

**Q: What is your understanding of the Department's role in the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism in the CENTCOM AOR?**

The Department's role in the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism in the CENTCOM AOR is to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and any Violent Extremist Organization (VEO) that poses a direct threat to U.S. assets, allies, and interests abroad. The Department must be part of a "whole-of-government" approach to combating long-term terrorism threats. Combined with diplomatic and economic mechanisms against state-enablers of terrorism, DoD can provide intelligence collection, training, support, and targeting to support counter terrorism efforts.

**Q: Given your current knowledge of CENTCOM programs, do you believe the Command's resources are aligned in a manner consistent with these counterterrorism priorities?**

Yes. CENTCOM resources are utilized to employ a whole of government approach to reach many of its desired end-states mentioned above. Partnerships with U.S. Government entities such as DoS, FBI, DEA, USAID, and the like are paramount in the efficient utilization of resources.

## **Iraq Lessons Learned**

**Q: Did you agree with the President's decision on the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Iraq? If so, why? If not, why not?**

Yes. Given the unwillingness of the Iraqi government to grant protections and immunities to our service members, thereby putting them at risk from prosecution in Iraqi courts, the U.S. had very few options. Our mission in Iraq today, which operates as part of the diplomatic mission, has been very successful at sustaining the crucial military-to-military relationship with the Iraqi Armed Forces.

**Q: What do you believe are the major lessons learned from the Iraq invasion and the follow-on efforts to stabilize the country through 2011?**

I believe the most significant lesson learned was that the US military is as capable and resilient – people, equipment, systems, and leadership – as at any time in our history, and it reaches its full potential when integrated and synchronized across a joint framework that has unity of purpose and effect. The second lesson I took away from our nation's commitment in Iraq was the need for a thorough, interagency, multi-national approach to planning and execution that delivers flexible military plans and operations that can be adjusted to account for the ever-changing conditions of warfare. The third lesson I took away from Iraq in December 2011 was that the military instrument of power has limitations and is best used as part of a whole of government (s) approach to the complex challenges we see today across the globe. Finally, I re-learned the value of close, personal relationships between coalition, host nation, interagency and other partners as teams of teams work to make progress in support of national goals.

**Q: What is your understanding and assessment, if any, of the Department's adaptations or changes in policy, programs, force structure, or operational concepts based upon these lessons learned?**

It is my understanding that the Department has applied several lessons learned, specifically to the approaching transition in Afghanistan. In my current position, I can see our approach to challenges is informed by experiences in Iraq. I am not in a position to assess the changes at the Department level, but there is a clear intent to use not only experiences in Iraq, but also experiences in combating terror and military engagements/operations over the past decade to inform policy, program, force structure, and operational concept decisions in the current and future environment.

**Q: If confirmed, what additional changes, if any, would you propose making to policy, programs, force structure or operating concepts based on the lessons of combat and stability operations in Iraq?**

Our relationship with the Iraqi security forces is incredibly important and robust. If confirmed, I will continue our efforts to improve the capability of Iraqi security forces while transitioning to a normal security relationship. Our goal has been and will continue to be a self-sufficient Iraqi military that provides for the defense of Iraq. Maintaining an appropriate sized OSC-I with the

required authorities is critical to this effort. Iraq's nascent government teeters between democracy and oligarchy. Although this problem cannot be solved solely through military means, OSC-I's success in maintaining strong mil-to-mil relations will afford other U.S. Government agencies the time and space needed to achieve U.S. objectives.

### **Security Situation in Iraq**

#### **Q: What is your assessment of the current security situation in Iraq?**

The tenuous security situation in Iraq reflects an immature government and security institutions, ethno-sectarian divisions and daunting external challenges. Following an unsuccessful effort by opposition political parties to unseat Prime Minister Maliki through a no confidence vote, Sunni opposition to perceived central government sectarianism and authoritarianism has intensified; and Kurdistan Regional Government and Government of Iraq security forces remain in a tense stand-off in the disputed areas around Kirkuk. Additionally, although well below 2006 levels, Iraq has been unable to break the cycle of extremist violence that has plagued the country since the withdrawal of U.S. Forces. Specifically, Al-Qaeda in Iraq has proven its resilience by maintaining a consistent tempo of high profile attacks against primarily government targets over the past year.

#### **Q: What are the main challenges to stability and security in Iraq over the coming months?**

The main challenges to stability include heightened Arab-Kurd tensions, unresolved sectarian tensions, extremist violence intended to undermine the government, and the potential for spillover from the Syrian conflict. The threat of an Arab-Kurd conflict has increased steadily in the past year as virtually every aspect of the Arab-Kurd relationship has worsened. Lagging political progress resulting from a lack of political reconciliation has resulted in increasing Sunni political opposition to the Shia-dominated government and made a return to sectarian violence possible. Al-Qaeda in Iraq has continued its cycle of violence and appears to be well postured to sustain current levels of violence into the future. The Syrian conflict has the potential to exacerbate many of the existing tensions already present in Iraq: galvanize the Sunni opposition, strengthen AQI, flood the country with refugees, and make weapons available to extremists, all stressing the nascent Iraqi government.

### **U.S.-Iraq Strategic Relationship**

**The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq at the end of 2011 has been described as the beginning of a new chapter in the strategic relationship between the United States and Iraq. The U.S.-Iraq Strategic Framework Agreement sets out a foundation for a normalized U.S.-Iraqi relationship in areas of mutual economic, diplomatic, cultural and security interests. Secretary of Defense Panetta and the Iraqi Minister of Defense recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Defense Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Iraq and the Department of Defense of the United**

States.

**Q: How do you see the U.S.-Iraq strategic relationship developing in the coming years and in what areas do you see potential for developing that relationship?**

The domestic and regional political challenges facing Iraqi leaders are not likely to subside and could complicate our overarching strategic relationship. However, we have been quite successful over the past year in sustaining our mil-to-mil relationship with the Iraqi Security Forces. I believe this could serve as a launching point to further expand our economic, cultural and diplomatic relationships under the Strategic Framework Agreement.

**Q: What do you see as the greatest challenges for the United States-Iraqi security relationship over the coming years?**

Domestic challenges, including ethnic and sectarian tensions and a lack of inclusiveness in the political system, if not effectively addressed, will complicate our security relationship. Meanwhile, we may have differing views from our Iraqi partners on regional conflicts, such as that in Syria, which may limit Iraq's willingness to partner with us.

**Q: What is your understanding and assessment of the recently concluded MOU? In your view, how does this agreement on defense cooperation promote U.S. security interests with respect to Iraq and the region?**

In my current position I am unable to provide an informed assessment of the recently concluded MOU. I understand the MOU is an official commitment between the USG and the Government of Iraq for a long-term security relationship. If confirmed, I will work with leaders in both nations to sustain, establish, and develop programs that pursue our shared goals. In the strategic realm, this agreement draws Iraq one-step closer to our nation.

### **Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq**

**In FY2012 and FY2013, Congress authorized the Secretary of Defense to support the transition in Iraq by providing funds for the activities and operations of the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq (OSC-I). In the report to accompany the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act, the conferees expressed their expectation that the Administration will accelerate the transition of the OSC-I to a normalized status comparable to Offices of Security Cooperation in other countries in the region, and that funding for OSC-I activities and operations will be transitioned out of the Department of Defense to other sources, as is the case for offices of security cooperation in other countries.**

**Q: Do you support the transition of the OSC-I to a normalized office of security cooperation comparable to those in other countries in the region?**

Yes. I fully support the Department of State's transition for Iraq as it was intended at the outset of planning. The normalization and transition activities of OSC-I are a reflection of the

development of our security relationship with the Government of Iraq (GoI) and represent a significant milestone towards an enduring strategic partnership.

**Q: If confirmed, will you ensure that the transition of the OSC-I to a normalized status, including funding from sources other than the DOD, is completed in a deliberate manner?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that the OSC-I transition is planned and executed in a deliberate manner that meets all policy and legal requirements.

**Q: Based on your experience during the drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, do you agree that setting a target date is critical for ensuring that the transition of the OSC-I to a normalized status occurs in a deliberate manner?**

The conditions and requirements for the drawdown in Iraq were bounded by a timeline, which is a different situation than transition of a security cooperation mission, but I would say that planning for strategic transitions should balance conditions, risks, and timelines that are in line with US policy. As time passes, leaders will assess changing conditions and risk to mission to ensure that timelines are met or extended in a manner that best achieves the goals of the transition. In the end, the US and Iraqi goal should be a security cooperation organization of the right size and with the right amount of resources to effectively pursue a positive, long-term strategic relationship. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that conditions and risks are clearly stated and options are presented that reflect the results of deliberate planning.

**Q: If confirmed, what timeframe would you recommend as an appropriate target for transitioning OSC-I to a normalized status?**

In my current position I am unable to provide an informed recommendation for a target date, but I have every confidence in the leadership team in Iraq and the planning for the current approach to the transition. If confirmed, I would consult with the interagency team to ensure that the military components of the transition were properly aligned and prepared for transition. I would also provide best military advice on the execution of the transition, presenting options that ensured our goals were met and our relationship with Iraq strengthened. If conditions change, I would also make case-by-case recommendations on programs that could be considered for acceleration or delay.

## Syria

**The civil war in Syria continues and President Assad's commitment to continuing his regime's ongoing operations appear unwavering despite broad international condemnation. To date, the United States has limited its support to opposition forces to non-lethal assistance to forces on the ground, as well as technical assistance to elements of the opposition working to build a cohesive political entity.**

**Q: In your view, what is the proper role on the United States military in this**

## **conflict?**

This is a complex problem requiring a regional solution. Certainly at this time, based on the complexity and volatility of the conflict, a regionally-led diplomatic and political strategy, with the U.S. in support, has the best chance of succeeding and enduring. However, we do need to remain vigilant and conduct appropriate planning to contain two emerging threats, the loss of control by the Syrian regime of its CW stocks and Advanced Conventional Weapons and the growing influence of violent extremists like the Al-Nusrah Front. Both of these emerging threats have the potential to spillover from Syria into neighboring countries, all of whom are U.S. allies and partners.

### **Q: In your view, should the United States provide other kinds of support to opposition groups on the ground in Syria, including the provision of lethal support?**

Based on the divergent interests and fractured nature of the armed opposition groups in Syria, there would be great risk to providing them with lethal aid at this time. The influential role of violent extremists like the Al-Nusrah Front within the opposition and the close proximity of Iranian surrogates and Lebanese Hizbollah to the conflict increase the chance of lethal aid finding its way into the hands of malign actors opposed to U.S. interests. The U.S. is best served by looking for opportunities to provide humanitarian aid and non-lethal assistance to acceptable elements of the opposition while working with regional partners to develop a diplomatic and political solution to the conflict.

### **Q: In your view, what should be NATO's role with respect to Syria (i.e. should NATO consider a military intervention, the creation of a no-fly zone, or other military operations to protect civilians and support opposition forces)?**

Any viable and enduring solution to the Syria crisis must rely heavily on leadership and participation from our regional partners. Having said that, NATO is currently providing Turkey with ballistic missile defense to hedge against potential Syrian military aggression. Any further role will be determined through consultation with Turkey and our other NATO allies.

### **Q: In your view, would the removal of the Assad regime be a strategic defeat of Iran in the region?**

The loss of Assad will be a significant blow to Iran's prestige and regional influence and will at least temporarily degrade its operational reach into the Levant by calling into question its longtime logistics hub in Syria. However, consistent with its hedging strategy, Iran will seek to develop other avenues for supporting its proxies and surrogates throughout the region and possibly even focus more attention on countries with large Shia populations like Iraq and Lebanon.

### **Q: In your view, what role, if any, has the Government of Iraq played with regard to supporting the Assad regime or the armed Syrian opposition?**

The Government of Iraq is attempting to remain neutral regarding the Syrian crisis and prefers a diplomatic solution to end the conflict. Understandably, Iraq is worried about spillover and is seeking to bolster the security of its border. Although the Iraqi government is not directly aiding the Assad regime, it may have tacitly supported Assad through Iranian over-flights to Syria. Iranian aircraft, overflying Iraqi territory, have transported humanitarian aid to the Assad regime and it is likely these shipments have included lethal aid. Iraqi authorities have conducted some cargo inspections, but have not fully addressed U.S. demands to ensure over-flights do not carry lethal aid.

## **Iran**

**Iran continues to expand its nuclear program and has failed to provide full and open access to all aspects of its current and historic nuclear program to the International Atomic Energy Agency.**

### **Q: What is your assessment of the military and political threat posed by Iran?**

Iranian military capabilities are significant as compared to its neighbors, and thus enable Iran to pursue a policy focused on reducing U.S. regional influence and asserting Iranian dominance in the region. The expansion of Iran's military and nuclear program over the last decade provides, in part, Tehran the confidence to threaten and coerce neighbors; disrupts international trade and commerce; and targets U.S. and partner interests in the region. Iran also maintains a significant asymmetric capability via its threat network, led primarily by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force (IRGC-QF) and its regional surrogates, and to a lesser degree the Ministry of Intelligence and Security.. Iran uses this threat network to covertly execute its strategic objectives in the region, advance its destabilizing agenda to include the provision of financial and lethal aid, and could use this network to attack United States' interests and our allies.

### **Q: What is your assessment of U.S. policy with respect to Iran?**

U.S. policy, aimed at preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, is appropriate and critical to avoiding a regional arms race and preserving stability in the Middle East. The U.S. Government's dual track strategy of engagement combined with pressure in the form of sanctions and diplomatic and political isolation is the right approach, and most likely to provide an enduring solution to the challenge posed by Iran's nuclear pursuits. The current strategy has rallied international support and significantly degraded Iran's economy, and as we sharpen the choice for the regime in Tehran, our parallel efforts of building our regional partners' military capabilities and maintaining credible deterrence remain critical elements of our broader multi-vector approach .

### **Q: What more do you believe the United States and the international community can and should do to dissuade Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons?**

I believe we should continue to employ the dual track strategy of engagement and pressure to achieve our goals. Whenever possible we should continue to strengthen the international

sanctions regime so as to increase the pressure on the Iranian government, while continuing to work with our international partners to underscore to Iran the costs it will bear for its nuclear non-compliance, as well as the deepening isolation it will face on the regional and global stage. Meanwhile, as we draw down forces in Afghanistan and as the overall size of the U.S. military presence within the Middle East decreases, it will become increasingly important that the U.S. maintain appropriate military capability in the region in order to be able to respond to a range of contingencies. This capability will also reassure our partners as we continue to build partner capacity in response to increasing Iranian malign activity. U.S. Government actions vis-à-vis Iran are closely knit together so as to achieve a “whole of government” approach to this problem set. By combining our efforts with the activities of our partners and friends worldwide, we have the best chance of achieving the objectives we seek in dissuading Iran from the pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability.

**Q: In your view, what are the risks associated with reducing U.S. presence in the Middle East with respect to the threat posed by Iran?**

There are significant risks associated with a reduced U.S. regional presence. U.S. Forces demonstrate our resolve and our commitment to regional security and the free flow of commerce, as well as a reflection of our continued efforts to build the capacity of regional partners. U.S. forces provide a deterrent to Iranian overreach and their drive for regional hegemony, and ensure we are prepared to respond to a range of regional contingencies. However, the U.S. should not carry this burden alone. An appropriately sized force contributes to increased burden sharing by training with regional partners to enhance their capacity to better defend themselves. Nonetheless, we must balance CENTCOM’s regional risk assessment with DoD and Service requirements to manage the overall readiness of the Force and the costs of associated deployments. This places a premium on building partner capacity and working by, with and through our regional partners to achieve a better balance of shared defense requirements. If confirmed, I will assess CENTCOM’s force posture, and my staff and I will work closely with the Joint Staff to determine the correct U.S. presence in the Middle East.

**Q: In your view, what has been the effect of sanctions against Iran – how effective have they been and should additional unilateral or multilateral sanctions be levied against Iran?**

Iran’s economy has been severely impacted by the unprecedented international sanctions that have been imposed, especially the sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the EU oil embargo. These sanctions have reduced the availability of hard currency and resulted in a sharply depreciated currency and high inflation rates. I expect these conditions to be exacerbated by additional sanctions that went into effect on 6 February that prevent foreign banks from repatriating Iran’s oil revenues, effectively locking them up overseas. These restrictions will likely cause further deterioration of Iran’s economy, such as expanding trade deficits, reduction in the availability of hard currency, a further depreciated Rial and higher inflation.

**Q: In your view, what role should CENTCOM play in countering Iran’s support of international terrorism throughout its AOR?**

CENTCOM, in very close coordination with SOCOM, plays a pivotal role in deterring Iran's support to terrorist organizations and countering Iran's malign influence. The Iranian Threat Network (ITN) is a worldwide network whose elements execute direct action, intelligence operations, influence building and terrorism against United States' interests, as well as partner nations. From the time of its creation, in response to the 1979 Iran crisis, CENTCOM has been crucial in defending U.S. interests within the Middle East. We will continue to work with our regional partners to build capacity to counter international terrorism in and outside the AOR. CENTCOM will continue to be the U.S. military's lead for defending U.S. interests in the region, maintaining the free flow of international commerce and protecting regional partners.

## **Egypt**

### **Q: What is your assessment of the security situation in Egypt?**

In the near term, large-scale civil unrest related to the ongoing political and economic crises presents an immediate threat to stability and security in the country. Internal security forces have struggled to control the types of large-scale demonstrations seen in Egypt in the past two years. Additionally, Egypt's security situation is impacted by the growth of violent extremist organizations in the Sinai Peninsula and increased arms smuggling from Libya and Sudan. The situation on the ground is further exacerbated by the government's inability to stabilize the political system. And, the poor security climate is hindering Egypt's economic recovery because it discourages foreign investment and the return of Egypt's large tourist economy.

### **Q: What is your assessment of the U.S.-Egypt security relationship?**

The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) has proven to be a reliable partner for us as we navigate Egypt's internal transition and seek to promote regional stability and security. We have relied on it during times of crises and it has been responsive and professional in its actions. EAF has announced its intentions and followed through in consistent fashion. Egypt indirectly supports U.S. regional objectives by allowing unfettered overflight permissions and Suez Canal transit courtesies not typically afforded to other nations. Additionally, Egypt's strategic importance and regional leadership role make it one of the most important partners in CENTCOM's theater of operations. Close defensive ties allow for open dialogue to discuss hard issues and identify areas for enhanced cooperation.

### **Q: What is your assessment of the role Egypt plays with respect to regional stability? In your view, should the U.S. Government continue to provide defense articles and services, including but not limited to the F-16s, purchased by the Egyptian military using U.S. Foreign Military Financing funds?**

By providing equipment and training the U.S. has helped Egypt to maintain a strong and disciplined professional defense force which is critical to ensuring Egypt's continued role as a regional leader, able to act as a moderating influence and contribute actively to the resolution of regional conflicts. For the past 30 years, the F-16 aircraft has been a key component of the relationship between the U.S. military and the Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF). Maintaining this

relationship and assisting with the professionalization and development of the EAF's capabilities to secure its borders is an essential element of our efforts to stabilize Egypt and the region. **Egypt has been criticized for its perceived failure to act along the Egypt-Gaza border to counter the smuggling threat posed by cross-border tunnels. Egypt has also played an important role, however, in ensuring peace on the southern border of Israel.**

**Q: What is your assessment of Egypt's efforts to counter the flow of rocket and other advanced munitions into Gaza?**

While Egyptian security forces have interdicted weapons shipments crossing Egyptian territory, their capabilities are limited and their success sporadic. Weapons coming into Egypt primarily from Sudan and Libya continue to transit the Sinai into Gaza. Extremists and militants are leveraging the lack of security in the Sinai and Egypt's inconsistent initiatives to their advantage.

### **Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula**

**A number of senior U.S. officials have indicated the most significant threat to the U.S. homeland currently emanates from Yemen.**

**Q: What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to the United States?**

Despite suffering severe territorial, personnel, and resource losses over the last year, attacking the U.S. Homeland remains a pillar of AQAP's overall strategy. As such, a small cadre of operatives continues to work tirelessly to develop plots against the West. While those operations appear to be stalled in the conceptual stages, the group's history and continued access to innovative bomb-makers and Western operatives suggests AQAP is capable of advancing an operation with little to no warning, particularly if counter terrorism pressure subsides.

**Q: What is your assessment of the current U.S. strategy to counter al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula?**

The CENTCOM strategy to counter threats in Yemen is outlined in a detailed plan of actions, activities and operations. I am not currently in a position to assess this strategy. However, I do believe that our overall approach to countering AQAP must involve our Interagency and regional partners. Only by effectively employing our network can we defeat the AQAP network. If confirmed, I will study this challenge further and look to pursue a whole-of-government approach.

**Q: What is the appropriate role of the U.S. military in countering the threat of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and how should this role be coordinated with other agencies and departments in prosecuting an interagency strategy?**

CENTCOM, in coordination with United States Government (USG) agencies and the Host Nation, supports and conducts enabling and security operations to promote a secure and stable

Yemen in order to neutralize threats against U.S. interests. CENTCOM supports a whole of government approach to improving the overall stability of Yemen. The goal is to set the conditions for Yemen to become a secure, stable and responsibly governed nation capable of providing for its own security and the needs of its population. CENTCOM Yemen Country Plan balances actions to disrupt and deny AQAP, security assistance activities, and support for other USG agencies' efforts to improve government capacity and economic development.

### **Regional Ballistic Missile Threats and Response**

**Iran has hundreds of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles today that are capable of reaching forward-deployed U.S. forces, allies, and other friendly nations in the CENTCOM AOR. Syria also has an inventory of ballistic missiles that pose a threat to the region. The Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report of February 2010 stated that the United States intends to pursue a Phased Adaptive Approach to ballistic missile defense against such missile threats in various regions, including the Middle East.**

**Q: Do you believe that such a phased adaptive approach will provide CENTCOM with the missile defense capabilities needed to defend our forward deployed forces and our allies and partners in the region?**

Yes, I believe a phased adaptive approach will provide CENTCOM the missile defense capabilities needed. As a framework, this approach phased over time and adaptive in terms of tailoring capabilities to specific threats, allows for effective mission command through continuous analysis and innovative methodologies. Additionally, continuing to assist our partners as they receive new Ballistic Missile Defense systems and upgrade older systems will remain a high priority. It is imperative we work together to increase our ability to defend ourselves and counter the threat.

**Q: What role do you see for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system with Standard Missile – 3 interceptors in U.S. missile defense capabilities in the CENTCOM AOR?**

The role of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system with SM-3 missile in the AOR is to provide layered, upper and lower tier protection, weighted coverage, and defense in depth of key force projection assets supporting CENTCOM CONPLANS against SRBM/MRBMs. These elements provide the ability to engage ballistic missiles at multiple levels (upper and lower tier) and ranges. The Aegis BMD system with SM-3, in coordination with Patriot, provides our only capability to execute layered defense in the CENTCOM AOR.

**Q: In addition to U.S. missile defense capabilities in the CENTCOM AOR, what role do you see for other nations in the AOR to contribute to regional missile defense capabilities, such as UAE interest in purchasing the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system?**

CENTCOM, in close coordination with the Department of State and the Office of the Secretary

of Defense, is working hard to get countries in the Gulf to realize the importance of cooperative defense, particularly in the area of air and missile defense. To date, partners such as UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have either purchased or are in the process of purchasing THAAD systems. The message to them and others is simple, no one can stand alone on this issue; cooperation and synchronization are critical to the successful defense of the region.

### **Central Asian States**

**The Central Asian states along the Northern Distribution Network have played important roles during the past few years in supporting U.S. and coalition forces in Afghanistan. These countries could also play a key role for the retrograde of U.S. and coalition equipment out of Afghanistan over the coming months and years.**

**Q: What is your assessment of current U.S. military relationships with the Central Asian states, including Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan?**

The Central Asian States remain key supporting partners for our Afghanistan Strategic Partnership. As we transition in Afghanistan, securing access to the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) for logistical resupply and retrograde operations is of particular importance as we seek to promote stability and assure our partners of our continued commitment to the region. The development of the NDN has been a critical area of investment to that end and cooperation with our Central Asian partners will gain additional importance post-2014.

Our relationship with Uzbekistan continues to improve in a deliberate, balanced way driven by regional security considerations, expansion of the NDN and mutual benefit.

Tajikistan's ability to build and maintain counterterrorism, border security, and counter narcotics capabilities is paramount in protecting our mutual interests from the threat of violent extremist organizations. We continue to use the Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan (KKT) route of the NDN as well as explore options to facilitate the transport of goods in the event of a crisis within this region.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a key partner for U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. The NDN network routes and the Transit Center at Manas remain key factors in successful operations in the region. However, the Kyrgyz government has consistently stated there will be no foreign military at Manas after the current lease expires in July 2014.

**Q: What role do you foresee the Central Asian states playing in the retrograde of U.S. equipment out of Afghanistan?**

The Central Asian States remain key supporting partners for our Afghanistan Strategic Partnership. As we transition in Afghanistan, securing access to the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) for logistical resupply and retrograde operations is of particular importance as we seek to promote stability and assure our partners of our continued commitment to the region. The supply lines through the Central Asian States provide the U.S. and NATO flexible and

redundant retrograde options. CENTCOM will retrograde consistent volumes of equipment through the Central Asian States in order to maintain these routes as a hedge against geopolitical uncertainty that could impact other routes.

**Q: What security challenges do you see in this portion of the CENTCOM AOR?**

There are several violent extremist organizations (VEOs), to include Al Qaeda and other Afghanistan- or Pakistan-based groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan that have expressed interest or intent to operate from and within Central Asia. The VEOs benefit from narcotics, arms trafficking, and smuggling which are pervasive threats in the region. These activities threaten legitimate commerce and the flow of strategic resources. The proliferation of material for weapons of mass destruction, associated delivery systems and the spread of technical expertise from and through the Central Asian States is another concern. Across the region there is a considerable lack of sustainable development; in the absence of economic opportunity, poor and disenfranchised communities can serve as hotbeds for the spread of violent extremism.

**India**

**Q: How does the fact that India is in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility (AOR) while Pakistan is in the CENTCOM AOR affect the United States' ability to treat the region's challenges holistically?**

The Unified Command Plan (UCP) "seam" between Pakistan and India does not degrade our ability to address the larger region. The CENTCOM and PACOM AOR share many of the same challenges, threats and opportunities. CENTCOM and PACOM routinely coordinate with each other to ensure unity of effort when dealing with the region's challenges.

**Q: In your view, how does our military cooperation and engagement with India affect our efforts in Pakistan and Afghanistan?**

Pakistan, naturally, has concerns about any military cooperation between the U.S. and India. This affects both our relationship with Pakistan and, indirectly, our efforts in Afghanistan. However, we make clear to Pakistan that our military cooperation and engagement is not a threat to Pakistan and that this is not a zero-sum game. We have important relationships and strategic partnerships with both countries that are not at the expense of either one.

**Counter Piracy Operations off the Horn of Africa**

**Over the past few years, U.S. forces have participated in a multi-national mission to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia. More recently, evidence suggests that the mission has achieved some measure of success, although the assigned task force continues its counter-piracy efforts.**

**Q: What is your assessment of the mission thus far?**

Attacks continue but with limited Pirate successes due to changes implemented by the commercial shipping industry and coalition naval presence which have placed a financial strain on Somali pirates. While we are currently experiencing success, piracy activity remains driven by the desire of pirates to gain multimillion-dollar ransoms with little risk.

**Q: In your opinion, how long should we continue the current mission as constituted and at what point should we consider a change to the strategy?**

While the mission has achieved a measure of success, it would be premature to shift our strategy as piracy will exist until it becomes cost prohibitive. The lower numbers in pirate success rates is also based on the introduction of newer, less experienced pirate groups which could change with time. The presence of counter-piracy Task Forces not only contributes to security, but facilitates global commerce and regional prosperity. Furthermore, Maritime Security Operations offers the best opportunity to work with partners to deny violent extremists free use of the sea which also contributes to overall regional security.

**Q: What do you see as the most appropriate maritime strategy in this region of the world, given the threats of weapons trafficking, human trafficking, and piracy?**

The most appropriate strategy is to continue our leadership role as expressed in the President's Maritime Security Policy and the NSS Counter Piracy Action Plan in conjunction with the international community. Specifically, the UN, NATO and the EU; and the maritime industry in general. The use of proven tactics and procedures within DoD and the Coalition, combined with the practice of industry best management procedures (such as vessel protection and disruption techniques) have reduced the unlawful maritime activity in the Horn of Africa. The combination of military operations and industry's response has resulted in suppression of these activities. However, in order to prevent the re-emergence of this activity, we must continue to work in partnership with the international community to suppress and strive towards the eradication of this threat to free international maritime security.

**Q: Given that Somalia has established a new federal government, how should U.S. policy toward pirate groups based in Somali territory be modified?**

CENTCOM's efforts, in conjunction with the international community, have produced positive results in increasing the maritime security in the Somali Basin. We must continue to work as part of a cohesive whole of government effort, both within the U.S. Government and with the appropriate international organizations (such as the UN, NATO, and the EU) and in conjunction with the Somali government, to continue our successes in reducing the maritime security threat expressed by the pirate groups, both ashore and at sea.

## **Israel**

**While Israel is not part of the CENTCOM AOR, it does play a role in the Command's AOR.**

**Q: In your assessment, what are the most significant threats facing Israel in the CENTCOM AOR?**

The greatest threat to Israeli security is the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. Despite sanctions and significant pressure from the international community, the Iranian regime continues to take steps that could support the development of a nuclear-weapons program. The potential of an Iranian nuclear weapon, coupled with Iran's advancement of Theater Ballistic Missiles (both accuracy and quantity), presents Israel with what they assess to be intolerable threats to their security. Hezbollah also represents a significant existential threat to Israel. Other significant threats to Israel's security include Iranian proxy elements and Palestinian rejectionists such as HAMAS and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Finally, regional instability provides VEOs with opportunities to gain new footholds in areas near Israel. For instance, Al Qaeda-aligned groups such as the al-Nusrah Front in Syria continue to gain strength in key Syrian cities and may target Israel when the Assad regime collapses. Similarly, violence and domestic concerns plague Egypt, which provides for under-governance in the Sinai, allowing greater freedom of action for AQ-inspired groups.

**Q: If confirmed, what do you view to be your role with respect to the defense of Israel?**

EUCOM is the lead military agency charged with defending Israel; however, CENTCOM has always worked very closely with EUCOM, SOCOM, and the Department of State to ensure there are no seams or gaps in our regional plans. As with our other allies in the Middle East, we must honor our commitments to Israel to support them during crisis. As the Middle East continues to deal with challenges in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon it will be critical for CENTCOM, EUCOM and SOCOM to closely coordinate our efforts to maintain a stable region and provide appropriate support to Israel.

**Arab Spring**

**The Arab Spring has changed – and will likely continue to change – the political dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa. These changes require the United States to adjust our military-to-military and defense civilian relations in this region. Some observers argue that the United States should reduce significantly our military-to-military contact in countries as a result of the ongoing changes and others advocate more robust and stepped-up contact with our partners in this region.**

**Q: In your view, what should be the posture of the U.S. Government on military-to-military and defense civilian relations in the region, particularly with respect to Egypt and Bahrain?**

Military to military engagements lay the foundation for and bolster our broader diplomatic and political relationships in the region, to include in Egypt and Bahrain. Much of this work is ongoing, but as resources decrease and American forward presence in the region declines, mil-

to-mil engagements and working by, with, and through our partners will become even more important. This type of engagement is often the bedrock of our relationships and affords us the trust necessary to dialogue quietly about contentious issues.

### **Building Partner Capacity and Security Assistance**

**In the past few years, Congress has provided DOD a number of temporary authorities to provide security assistance to partner nations, including the global train and equip authority (“Section 1206”), Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF), and the niche authority for Yemen’s Ministry of Interior Counterterrorism Unit.**

**Q: What is your understanding of the purpose of the Section 1206 global train and equip authority and Global Contingency Security Fund?**

The purpose of Section 1206 authority (Global Train and Equip) is to enhance the capacity of foreign nations to conduct counterterrorism operations with either their national military forces or maritime security forces. Additionally, the authority allows the Department to improve partner nations’ capabilities to participate in or support military and stability operations in which the U.S. Armed Forces are a participant.

The Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) is similar in some aspects to the Section 1206 authority. Both seek to improve the capability of a foreign country’s national military forces to conduct counterterrorism operations or help a partner nation participate in or support military operations consistent with U.S. foreign policy and national security interests. However, the GSCF is not as narrowly defined or restricted as Section 1206. GSCF can be used for border security, internal defense, justice sector programs (including law enforcement and prisons), and stabilization efforts within a country where instability challenges the existing capability of civilian providers to deliver such assistance. Additionally, more organization, such as within a nation’s Ministry of Interior, would be a potential recipient of GSCF funds; Section 1206 restricts funding to a country’s Ministry of Defense or Maritime Security forces.

**Q: In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the CENTCOM AOR?**

Our strategic objectives in building partner capacities in the AOR include partners that are capable of deterring, defending, and cooperating against attack; controlling their borders; mitigating ungoverned spaces; enhancing stability; and maintaining cooperative, interest-based relations with their neighbors; and Regional Partners in the AOR that remain accessible and cooperative with the United States.

**The funding pool available for security assistance and other military-to-military engagement activities devoted to the CENTCOM AOR tends to be allocated to specific countries.**

**Q: What is your understanding of the role CENTCOM plays in developing U.S.**

**security assistance priorities (e.g., Section 1206, Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training assistance, Combatant Commander Initiative Fund)?**

CENTCOM collaborates with the DoS and each Security Cooperation Office (SCO) to develop security assistance programming priorities which are aligned with the Department's Security Cooperation Guidance and supports the Theater Campaign Plan as well as the individual Country Plans. These priorities and recommended funding levels are submitted to DoD for inclusion in the President's Budget Request each year.

### **U.S. Contributions to International Peacekeeping Missions**

**In testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on July 29, 2009, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) stated that the United States “is willing to consider directly contributing more military observers, military staff officers, civilian police, and other civilian personnel—including more women I should note—to UN peacekeeping operations.” General Dempsey has said the United States “should consider opportunities for U.S. personnel to contribute to UN peacekeeping missions” and that “experience shows that even a small number of trained and experienced American service members can have a significant, positive effect on U.N. operations.”**

**Q: In your view, should the United States increase the number of personnel it contributes in the form of staff positions and military observers to UN peacekeeping missions and other international peace operations?**

Overall, I agree with GEN Dempsey's position; however, our first priority remains our significant troop commitments in Afghanistan.

**Q: In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of contributing additional military personnel to UN operations in the form of staff positions and military observer positions?**

U.N. peacekeeping operations are a cost-effective alternative to unilateral U.S. military action. Such missions support U.S. interests around the world, promoting stability and saving civilian lives. U.S. military personnel make significant contributions to these efforts, particularly in specialized areas such as logistics and intelligence. However, the competing requirements of additional participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations must be weighed against potential costs, to include the increase in the operational tempo of the force.

**Q: In your view, would an increase in the number of U.S. military personnel assigned to U.N. peacekeeping missions in the CENTCOM AOR help you advance the theater campaign plan?**

While this is not an issue that I am ready to fully assess, there are many important factors to balance in making such an assessment, including ongoing U.S. military commitments and

engagements in the AOR and perceptions in the region that would result from an increase in US Peacekeepers. I would need to study the issue further to ensure that while addressing one issue we do not inadvertently create additional issues.

### **National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime**

**Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing. The Director of National Intelligence recently described transnational organized crime as “an abiding threat to U.S. economic and national security interests,” and stated that “rising drug violence and corruption are undermining stability and the rule of law in some countries.” In July 2011, the President released his Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. One of the priority action areas designated in the strategy is “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement.”**

**Q: What is your understanding of the President’s strategy to combat transnational criminal organizations?**

The President’s plan for combating transnational criminal organizations is reflected in the National Security Strategy. As part of a whole-of-government approach the Department of Defense can bring to bear unique authorities and capabilities to augment those of our law enforcement and intelligence communities. Of note is the policy’s call for increasing intelligence and information sharing as well as building international capacity, cooperation and partnerships.

**Q: What is your assessment of the threat to the United States posed by transnational organized crime? Would you consider it a national security threat?**

The growing interconnectivity among transnational organized crime (TOC), terrorist groups, and insurgencies threatens US national security interests. TOC exploits porous borders caused by regional unrest, the speed of global trade, and the growing demand for drugs and weapons to cooperate with terrorist and insurgent groups. Similarly, terrorist and insurgent groups mobilize TOC networks to undermine governments/state institutions and engage in illicit activities (i.e., narcotics trafficking, money laundering, small arms/light weapons sales, and counterfeit goods) to bolster their resources, which improves operational capability and effectiveness.

### **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.**

**Q: What are your views on the role the United States plays in the prevention of mass**

### **atrocities and genocide?**

The United States, as a world leader, has resources which it can bring to bear to aid in the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide. The decision to commit these resources clearly resides with the President. As a military commander, I understand my responsibility under the Law of Armed Conflict to protect civilians from physical violence and to contribute to a secure, stable and just environment for civilians over the long-term.

### **Q: What are your views on the adequacy of the Department's tools and doctrine for contributing to this role?**

Although the CJCS has the Department's lead for further developing operational principles, the Geographic Combatant Commands will incorporate mass atrocity prevention and response as a priority in planning, activities, and engagements. By applying our lessons learned methodology to previous and future activities we will continue to expand and refine our capabilities and capacities to respond as a decisive element of a whole of government effort.

### **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.**

### **Q: What are your views on the role of DOD in counter threat finance activities?**

It is appropriate for the Department of Defense to play a supporting role in countering threat finance activities. The Department of Defense does bring unique capabilities to the effort of the broader interagency community. The Department of Defense can provide its intelligence analysis to identify critical network vulnerabilities as well as its strategic and operational planning expertise.

### **Q: Are there opportunities to replicate or improve upon the network-disruption efforts of groups like the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization or the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell in impacting other facilitation networks?**

Yes. The Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization and the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell multi-national and interagency approaches to the counter-IED and threat finance problem sets provide an effective framework that I believe may be applied to other networked problem sets such as narcotics and weapons trafficking. If confirmed, I will actively pursue such multi-nation and interagency solutions to the problems that we face in the CENTCOM AOR to the maximum extent possible.

**Q: 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?**

In keeping with OSD / Joint Staff / SOCOM (CTF DoD lead component) policies, DoD should coordinate counter threat finance activities with other agencies and departments through the Geographic Combatant Command's interagency process. This type of interface will ensure the IA receives one set of theater threat finance priorities, reduces redundant and conflicting DoD requests to the IA, and increases opportunities to disrupt adversary finance networks. Counter threat finance intelligence support (e.g., collection requirements, production) should be brokered through theater, component, task force J2s and directly with DoD's consolidated threat finance intelligence initiatives within the Defense Intelligence Agency.

### **Lebanon**

**Over the past decade, the United States has provided over \$500 million in security assistance to the Government of Lebanon.**

**Q: In your view, what is the appropriate role for CENTCOM in Lebanon?**

CENTCOM continues to act as a mentor and enabler of the Lebanon Armed Forces (LAF). Our relationship enables the U.S. and Lebanon to work toward mutually-supporting goals. A reduction of CENTCOM involvement in Lebanon would increase the temptation and necessity for Lebanon to consider taking aid from countries whose interests conflict with U.S interests.

**Q: In your view, what are the U.S. national security interests in Lebanon?**

The primary U.S. security interest in Lebanon is to strengthen the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) as a counterweight to Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) and, in doing so, reduce the malign influence of Iran in the region. Instability in Lebanon plays into the interests of LH, Syria, and Iran. The multi-confessional nature of the LAF makes it a unifying force in Lebanon acting as a stabilizing force to the detriment of our adversaries in the region.

**The current government in Lebanon includes Hezbollah, a designated foreign terrorist organization under U.S. law.**

**Q: Given the involvement of Hezbollah in the Lebanese government, what do you believe to be the appropriate level of engagement with the Lebanese Armed Forces?**

The LAF has proven itself to be independent of Hezbollah influence despite Hezbollah's involvement in the Lebanese government. To date, Hezbollah's involvement has had no impact on our relationship and current levels of engagement with the LAF. In light of the ongoing situation in Syria, our various forms of aid to the LAF are vital to maintaining peace internally while guarding against spillover violence from across the Syrian border. Our persistent efforts to

provide military training and material support to the LAF have enabled them to be a more effective counter-balance to Lebanese Hezbollah (LH).

## **China**

**Over the past several years, much as been made of China's military growth and modernization and of China's influence throughout Asia, including the portions of the region that fall within the CENTCOM commander's area of responsibility. For example, many observers point out that China has developed and maintains a partnership with Iran based, at least in part, on economic and defense cooperation, and that China's policies toward Iran have hindered international efforts to deter Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability.**

**Q: What do you see as the effect of China's economic and military growth on the CENTCOM AOR as a whole?**

China relies heavily on energy resources found in the CENTCOM AOR (Middle East and Central Asia) to meet its growing domestic demand for energy and achieve its strategic objective of sustained economic growth. China seeks to build political and economic relationships with countries in the CENTCOM AOR to ensure that Beijing maintains access to the region's energy resources, but China plays little role in guaranteeing security and stability throughout the region. China has historically been a source of arms sales for countries seeking to upgrade their arsenals and/or procure cheaper alternatives to U.S. weapons.

**Q: How does China's relationship with Iran, in particular, affect U.S. security interests in the region?**

China is Iran's largest purchaser of crude oil. However, China reduced its imports of Iranian crude oil in 2012 compared to the previous year, in response to U.S. diplomacy. While China voted for sanctions on Iran in UN Security Council Resolution 1929, it has publicly opposed additional national sanctions that have been levied by the United States, European Union and others. Iran seeks to use its relationship with China to gain influence within the UNSC, seeking support from China during resolution votes. Iran will likely continue efforts to build on its relationship with China as it depends on Beijing to offset the high cost of business transactions due to sanctions.

## **DOD 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 approximately \$1.5 billion to support the Department's CN operations, including to build the capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and certain foreign governments, and provide intelligence support on CN-related matters and a variety of other unique enabling capabilities.**

**Q: In your view, what is the appropriate role of DOD – and by extension CENTCOM – in counterdrug efforts?**

In the CENTCOM AOR, counterdrug authorities provided by Congress permit us to support our Federal law enforcement partners in their engagement with regional counterdrug security force organizations. These activities address many of the U.S. Government's, and by extension CENTCOM's, most pressing regional security issues. Counterdrug activities are often one of the few avenues for military engagement with our regional partners.

**Q: 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.?**

The United States should always consider partnering with governments requesting counterdrug assistance when it supports U.S. national interests. Drug trafficking organizations are international by nature and the larger the coalition of the willing to address the illicit drugs business, the greater the global impact we could achieve. Counter-narcotics operations provide opportunities for developing mil-to-mil relationships and building partner capacity.

**Q: Given that the vast majority of illegal drugs transiting in the CENTCOM AOR are not destined for the United States, should DOD invest resources in countering the flow of illegal drugs to or through the CENTCOM AOR?**

It is shortsighted to view illicit drugs trafficking activity through the prism of only what comes into the United States. Narcotics play a critical role in underwriting corruption, which poses the greatest strategic threat to the ISAF campaign plan. So, while only a relatively minor portion of Afghan opiates make their way to the U.S., their impact on U.S. Government engagement in the CENTCOM AOR is significant. An effective U.S. counterdrug strategy includes attacking the illicit drugs trafficking business at every opportunity from source to end user. Counter-narcotics operations provide opportunities for developing mil-to-mil relationships and building partner capacity.

**Strategic Communications and Information Operations**

Over the past decade, DOD has funded an increasing number of military information support operations (formerly known as psychological operations) and influence programs. The Government Accountability Office reports that DOD has “spent hundreds of millions of dollars each year” to support its information operations outreach activities. Many of these programs are in support of operations in Afghanistan, but Military Information Support Teams (MISTs) from United States Special Operations Command also deploy to U.S. embassies in countries of particular interest around the globe to bolster the efforts of the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Further, the geographic combatant commands are increasingly moving into this operational space.

**Q: What are your views on DOD's military information support operations and influence programs?**

Military information support operations (MISO) is a critical investment in deterrence and prevention of conflict when synchronized with Inter-Agency efforts. Integral to all phases of military operations, MISO serves to shape information environments and mitigate risk to mission and forces in advance of and during conflict.

**Q: What unique value should such programs contribute in distinction from strategic communications and influence activities conducted by other government departments and agencies?**

CENTCOM's Information Operations (IO) capability is unique in that it is opponent focused (military targets), tightly integrated with special and technical operations programs and interconnected with the communications community both military and Inter-Agency. It has the flexibility to employ attributable and non-attributable means (within scope of policy) to achieve objectives unlike other Public Affairs and Defense Support to Public Diplomacy. CENTCOM's IO capability specializes in languages unique to the designated area of operations; staff and units of execution have hands-on experience understanding key opponent influence systems; and our IO is postured to rapidly target those opponents when authorized.

### **Regional Alignment and Rotational Deployments of Army Brigades**

**The Army plans to align general purpose combat brigades with regional combatant commands, including CENTCOM, to support theater engagement and security force assistance missions and to make those forces, and other supporting units, available on a rotational basis for deployment to those regions for training and exercises.**

**Q: What is your understanding and assessment of the Army's capability and capacity to align combat brigades or other units with regional combatant commands?**

As Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, I have been involved in the development of the Regional Alignment of Forces (RAF) concept. I believe it is sound and will provide Geographic Combatant Commanders with professionally trained and regionally attuned forces and capabilities that are both responsive and capable of meeting theater requirements. The Army is executing its first "proof of principle" of the Regionally Aligned Forces concept in Fiscal Year 2013 by aligning a brigade combat team to AFRICOM. The Army will conduct a subsequent comprehensive assessment of this effort that will further drive our understanding of our capability and capacity to execute this mission set going forward.

**Q: What are your views, if any, on the use of general purpose forces for missions providing security force assistance to other nations' militaries?**

Recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have demonstrated that general purpose forces are quite capable of executing the security force assistance mission set. Moreover, general purpose forces can be a key asset as we continue to build the military capacity of our allies. As an example, our military has a rich history of cooperative small unit training exercises across a

range of Combatant Commands. Ultimately, such efforts must be synchronized with the Combatant Commander's Theater Security Cooperation plan.

**Q: In your view, how, if at all, should a unit's regional alignment impact the assignment of personnel, selection of unit commanders, priority for cultural and language training compared to core combat training, and identification and acquisition of special equipment?**

The Army is currently conducting a comprehensive analysis of requirements and impacts of the regionally aligned forces concept. This analysis will account for factors associated with doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities. Further, the 2013 regional alignment of the brigade combat team to AFRICOM will inform this analysis. Factors associated with the alignment of divisions and corps will also inform this analysis. Ultimately, the Army seeks to support Combatant Commands while remaining operationally adaptable to respond to global contingencies, as required.

**Q: If confirmed, how would you propose to implement the use of regionally aligned forces in support of your theater assistance and engagement strategies?**

Use of regionally aligned forces to support CENTCOM theater assistance and strategy will not be fundamentally different than how other forces are now used. The significance of using such forces is that regional alignment will enhance relationships between planning staffs while improving the aligned units' familiarity with areas in which they will most likely be employed.

**Q: In your view, how should funding responsibility be consolidated or distributed between the military departments and the combatant commands for training and employment of regionally aligned forces?**

I believe the current construct established under the Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act of 1996 adequately and efficiently defines the roles and responsibilities of the Services and Defense Agencies in Supporting the Combatant Commands. The Services are and should continue to be funded to man, train and equip their forces in support of Combatant Command Operational mission sets regardless of whether those forces are regionally aligned. However, Combatant Commanders should provide funds for training and exercises conducted in their AOR.

**Q: In your view, is it feasible and suitable to satisfy theater engagement and assistance strategies completely with rotational forces? If not, why?**

CENTCOM has successfully conducted operations, exercises and activities since its inception without permanently assigned forces. Like other commands, it plans and requests forces through the Global Force Management process. I have complete faith that all CENTCOM theater engagement and assistance strategies can be met with rotational forces, particularly regionally aligned forces.

## NATO Alliance

**The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance 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.**

**Q: Do you agree that U.S. participation in the NATO Alliance contributes to advancing U.S. security interests?**

Yes, members of the NATO Alliance share the same concerns for National Security as we do. Participation in the Alliance furthers international security and U.S. security interests.

**Q: What are the greatest opportunities and challenges that you foresee for NATO in meeting its strategic objectives over the next five years, particularly with regard to NATO activities in the CENTCOM AOR?**

We are all operating in a challenging fiscal environment, and are seeking ways to more efficiently meet our strategic objectives. In this austere environment, there may be opportunities to expand interoperability and cost sharing through combined training exercises, utilizing our well-developed training facilities in Europe.

**Q: 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 impact of reduced spending will be felt throughout the Alliance. We can work to mitigate the impact by exploring avenues of increasing interoperability, and perhaps achieving economies of scale through international cooperative research, development and acquisition.

**Q: What is your assessment of the effectiveness of nations of the Middle East in recent NATO military operations in Libya?**

Middle East nations have been effective in recent NATO operations and served as an integral part of the Coalition. A prime example would be the efforts by UAE, Qatar, and Jordan who flew combat sorties during Operation ODYSSEY DAWN in Libya. Continued training and exchanges with our partners in the Middle East forges bonds that can last generations and give us resources that when needed fulfill operational requirements and further strengthen our ties.

**Q: What steps, if any, do you think CENTCOM should take to improve the interoperability of military forces from the CENTCOM region with the U.S. and other international security actors?**

CENTCOM remains committed to working with coalition partners to improve stability, peace and security for all partnered nations in the CENTCOM AOR and neighboring AORs.

Engagement is certainly less costly than war and ensuring the interoperability of our militaries is the requisite investment to achieve that goal. The most dramatic effect on interoperability can be achieved through increasing International Military Exchange and Training (IMET) funding for military career schools and education.

### **Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Capabilities**

**Since 9/11, CENTCOM has received the overwhelming majority of the ISR support that DoD has been able to generate. The demand for more ISR has continued to outstrip the supply, even though the Secretary of Defense has taken extraordinary actions to ramp up the acquisition of more and more capable and varied ISR systems. Other combatant commands and other military missions and operations outside of the CENTCOM AOR have gone wanting.**

**Q: Do you foresee, and if so to what degree, CENTCOM relinquishing existing ISR systems as forces are withdrawn from Afghanistan and as demand continues to grow in AFRICOM, PACOM and other AORs?**

CENTCOM remains actively engaged with ISAF and USFOR-A on planning for ISR support through OEF Change of Mission and support to the Enduring Force Headquarters post-OEF. We have learned through experience that as our footprint shrinks the demand for ISR increases. CENTCOM will conduct an OEF Redeployment Conference and an OPLAN Development Conference within the next 60 days. Both events will enable us to further refine the ISR requirements in support of the drawdown and beyond. If confirmed, I will further assess the requirement for ISR in the CENTCOM AOR.

### **Science and Technology**

**As with other combatant commands, a Science and Technology (S&T) advisor is assigned to support CENTCOM.**

**Q: If confirmed, what would be your priorities for the CENTCOM Science and Technology advisor?**

The Science Advisor acts as principle advisor to the commander on matters of science, technology, innovation, and fielding of material and non-material solutions for the command's most pressing capability gaps. If confirmed, I will charge the Science Advisor with the discovery, research, analysis and advocacy of new and emerging technologies and techniques which have the potential to provide solutions to our validated joint needs. I will require the Science Advisor to continue to discover, develop, and advocate for those technologies and techniques that will make our warfighters safer, more efficient, and more effective in the immediate and near-term. I will charge the Science Advisor to engage with partner countries to develop mutually required technologies that will also keep coalition forces safe, allow them to be more effective through better integration with U.S. forces, and help build stronger partnerships

for the future. I will also charge the Science Advisor with looking beyond the horizon to ensure CENTCOM warriors maintain their battlespace technology superiority during potential future conflicts.

### **Operational Energy**

**Several of your predecessors have established and published policies regarding operational energy and its important role in supporting the mission in Afghanistan. These policies have stressed better management of energy use in the battle space to provide a strategic and tactical advantage while increasing combat effectiveness and operational capability.**

**Q: Do you plan to establish and publish similar policies regarding operational energy improvements?**

If confirmed, I will continue to support the CENTCOM established policies and procedures regarding operational energy which are now in the refinement phase. These policies and procedures include a standing policy on Operational Energy which the Command has implemented and Service Components and Joint Task Forces have similarly adopted. I will also assess the Command's Operational Energy initiatives to identify areas where CENTCOM can further enhance combat power and ensure good stewardship of our finite energy resources.

**Q: What is your assessment of how better operational energy management translates, if at all, into improving combat effectiveness?**

Better operational energy management translates to fewer fuel convoys, thereby freeing convoy security forces to conduct other operational missions. Decreased energy consumption and spending also creates the potential to reinvest funds towards force protection and other needed capabilities which ultimately increase combat effectiveness.

**Q: How do you plan to track fuel consumption at forward-deployed locations in Afghanistan?**

The Afghan Sub-Area Petroleum Office (A-SAPO), an element of USFOR-A Headquarters, receives regular fuel consumption reports from sustainment forces providing fuel distribution services in Afghanistan. A-SAPO reviews these reports and forwards them to the CENTCOM Joint Petroleum Office.

### **CENTCOM and DOD Global Posture Review**

**According to the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, DOD will conduct a global posture review that assesses U.S. strategic relationships and interests to identify where and at what levels the forward stationing of military forces supports those relationships and interests. The new strategic guidance released by the Secretary of Defense in January 2012 stated regarding the Middle East that "the United States will continue to place a**

**premium on U.S. and allied military presence in – and support of – partner nations in and around this region.”**

**Q: What is your assessment of the current and future strategic requirement for basing U.S. military personnel and equipment in the Middle East?**

At present, CENTCOM has sufficient access and basing to execute current operations and continually looks for ways to improve the flexibility and depth in the theater basing network to support potential surge operations if required, and mitigate risk caused by access denial and loss of access should it occur. The Command has been working with the Department on key elements of a posture strategy and is incorporating this in the planning process. CENTCOM has been revising its posture in theater for some time as we continue efforts to reset forces for current and future operational requirements. This process will continue as we work towards the successful completion of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

**Q: Aside from contingency operations, do you believe the number of U.S. forces permanently stationed within CENTCOM is sufficient to meet U.S. national security objectives in the region?**

In my current position I am unable to provide an adequate assessment of requirements and requisite forces in the CENTCOM AOR. However, if confirmed, I will work with DoD to define the right mix of capabilities to meet future steady state mission requirements and to provide a rapid response capability in the event of a crisis.

### **CENTCOM Headquarters**

**Q: Based on the drawdown in Afghanistan and completed redeployment out of Iraq, will you conduct a review of the size of the CENTCOM headquarters?**

Yes. CENTCOM headquarters is undergoing a manpower and organization review now, assisted by the Army and Air Force Manpower Agencies. If confirmed, I will assess the study recommendations and shape the headquarters for future operations.

### **Treatment of Detainees**

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

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

Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that CENTCOM forces fully comply with all relevant provisions of Department of Defense directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures applicable to U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and that they fully comply with the requirements of section 1403 of the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005 and with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

**Q: 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 DOD Detainee Program, dated September 5, 2006?**

Yes. I understand and support the standards for the treatment of detainees and will adhere to them, if confirmed. All detainees shall be treated humanely, and in accordance with U.S. law, the Law of War, and applicable U.S. policy. Humane treatment entails the following: no violence, no cruelty, no torture, and no humiliating or degrading treatment.

**Q: Do you believe it is consistent with effective counterinsurgency operations for US forces to comply fully with the requirements of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?**

Yes. I believe all military operations, to include counterinsurgency operations, must be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions.

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

If confirmed, I will set forth clear standards and expectations and demonstrate my personal commitment to those standards. I will ensure that guard forces are thoroughly trained in the humane treatment of detainees. Personnel at all levels will be trained on the importance of discouraging abuse and empowered to report any signs of abuse. Where appropriate, we will conduct routine inspections.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

**On June 21, 2010, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a DOD-wide policy on the management of mild traumatic brain injury in deployed settings.**

**Q: What is your assessment of the effect of this policy in safeguarding service members from further traumatic brain injury?**

This has proven to be a very effective policy and I am confident it will contribute immensely in our understanding of mTBI and how best to prevent, detect and treat these injuries. The current policy is based on the recently published DoD Instruction 6490.11 and ensures that all potentially concussive events (mild TBI) are identified, evaluated, treated and tracked by both the line leadership as well as those in the military medical community. This policy also limits

the activity of those individuals identified with multiple concussions and ensures they receive complete and timely follow-up and are protected from the possibility of further brain injuries.

### **Mental Health Assessments and Treatment in Theater**

**The Army’s Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) has made seven separate assessments over the past several years detailing the immediate effects of combat on mental health conditions of U.S. soldiers and marines deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The most recent study, MHAT VI, found that “soldiers on their third and fourth deployment report lower morale and more mental health problems,” and that stigma continues to prevent some soldiers from seeking mental health care. These types of reports lend support to the fact that increasing numbers of troops are returning from duty in Afghanistan with posttraumatic stress, depression, and other mental health problems.**

**Q: Do you have any views on how to best address the mental health needs of our troops in theater, in terms of both prevention and treatment?**

Ensuring that the behavioral health and counseling services are readily available and accessible for our Service Members remains a high priority. Services are emphasizing resiliency training for Service Members with additional screening prior to deployment by qualified mental health providers focused on behavioral health (BH) disorders and wellness. Individuals, who have specific behavioral health conditions that require specific treatments, and have not demonstrated adequate resolution of their behavioral health condition or symptoms, are not permitted to deploy. For those in theater, the availability of Restoration Centers, tele-behavioral health (TBH) and an easy-to-use crisis line in conjunction with deployed behavioral health providers have given Service Members more options to take preventive measures and seek treatment. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of mental health prevention and treatment for our Service Members.

**Q: Do you believe that mental health resources in theater are adequate to handle the needs of our deployed service members?**

Yes. To my knowledge the Behavioral Health (BH) resources available to our Service Members in theater are adequate to handle the needs of our deployed troops. Keeping in mind that as our footprint changes our resources will change and we will have to ensure we maintain an adequate balance between number of Service Members and mental health care providers.

**Q: If confirmed, would you request additional behavioral health resources from the services, if needed, to meet the needs of units deployed to the CENTCOM AOR?**

Yes. If additional behavioral health resources were deemed necessary, I would not hesitate to request such resources from the Services to fill any identified gaps.

### **Suicide Prevention**

**The number of suicides in each of the services continues to concern the Committee. A number of these military suicides are committed in theater.**

**Q: What is your assessment of CENTCOM's suicide prevention program?**

The challenge of suicide represents the most difficult one I have faced in my 37-year career in the Army. While I'm not currently in a position to assess CENTCOM's suicide prevention program, I know from experience that an effective suicide prevention program requires involved and engaged leadership at every level. If confirmed, I will ensure suicide prevention receives the appropriate command and leadership emphasis throughout the CENTCOM organization.

**Q: In your view, are there any unique stressors in the CENTCOM AOR that contribute to the number of suicides of service members serving in, or who have recently served in, the CENTCOM AOR?**

Certainly there are stressors in the CENTCOM AOR. These include exposure to combat environments, multiple deployments and high operational tempo. That said, the challenge of suicide is incredibly complex. And, while some of the stressors experienced in the CENTCOM AOR may contribute to acts of suicide or suicidal ideations, generally there is no single causal factor. In most cases, a combination of stressors lead an individual to take his/her own life or attempt to do so. That said, I do recognize that most CENTCOM forces are rotational. They are often required to operate in stressful environments away from their loved ones. If confirmed, as CENTCOM commander I will be mindful of these stressors and associated challenges and I will make sure my subordinate commanders are appropriately focused on them as well.

**Q: If confirmed, what resources would you use to help prevent suicides in theater and to prepare redeploying service members for transition to life back at home?**

Prevention of suicide in theater and at home is a vital priority – the safety of all deploying, deployed, and returning Service Members is always foremost among my priorities.

Confronting the difficult reality of suicide in the force requires regularly exercising a broad complement of health resources within fully supportive command culture. This process begins with recognizing the importance of taking care of people, which will always remain the most important asset in our military. It is imperative that we implement programs and separate suicide prevention initiatives that comprise a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention throughout the life cycle of the training and deployment so that Service Members can receive appropriate counseling, assistance, respite, and support. Continuing to educate Leaders at all levels regarding behavioral health and its resources, both in theater and out, along with the installation of resiliency training will assist with identifying Service Members who may need additional resources while decreasing the stigma associated with behavioral health treatment. All resources available to Service Members need to be actively engaged to educate and support our Service Members to ensure a seamless transition during all phases of a deployment.

## **Sexual Assault**

**Sexual assaults continue to be a significant issue in the military. Victims of sexual assault report that they are victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate treatment for the victim and failure of the chain of command to hold assailants accountable. Secretary Panetta has recently announced several new initiatives to address the sexual assault problems in the military, including comprehensive assessments of initial training of enlisted personnel and officers, creation of special victim capabilities, and limiting initial disposition authority to Special Court-Martial Convening Authorities in the grade of O-6 or higher.**

**Q: What is your assessment of the sexual assault prevention and response program in CENTCOM?**

I am not currently in a position to assess CENTCOM's sexual assault prevention and response program. However, if confirmed, I will make sexual assault prevention a leadership focus throughout the command and ensure that the sexual assault prevention and response programs in CENTCOM subordinate commands and components are effective and vigorously maintained and supported. Training must be high quality and engaging. Commanders and leaders must be present and involved in training. They must also take an active role in selecting unit sexual harassment/assault representatives and victim advocates. It is extremely important that the right individuals be selected for these key positions.

**Q: What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources available in the CENTCOM AOR for providing appropriate support to victims of sexual assault?**

I am not currently in a position to assess the adequacy of the training and resources available in the CENTCOM AOR. However, if confirmed, I will make sure that the appropriate support is provided to victims of sexual assault, both those in the CENTCOM AOR and in CONUS. That said, I believe that sexual assault prevention and response training must begin before leaving home station. Forces who have conducted training prior to deployment are much better equipped to prevent sexual assault in the first place and address reports of sexual assault if/when they do arise.

**Q: What is your assessment of the capability in the CENTCOM AOR to investigate allegations of sexual assault and to hold assailants accountable for their acts?**

I believe that CID, AFOSI, and NCIS are capable of investigating any sexual assault that occurs in the CENTCOM AOR. Commanders have the ability to hold service members accountable when they have been accused of sexual assault. Commanders can pursue the same options while deployed as they would in garrison, up to and including a general court-martial, and I will make it a priority to ensure they have the resources in theater to do so.

## **Intelligence Support for Indirect Activities**

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

**Q: If confirmed, how would you ensure that general purpose forces and special operations forces engaged in indirect activities receive adequate intelligence support?**

If confirmed, I would ensure our forces, regardless of whether they are engaged in direct action or indirect activities, receive the intelligence support they need to effectively execute and accomplish their mission. I will clearly state my Priority Intelligence Requirements and allocate Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance support in accordance with prioritized, theater requirements and capabilities.

### **Special Operations Forces in Support of Country Teams**

**U.S. Special Operations Command deploys personnel to work with country teams in a number of priority countries where the United States is not engaged in direct action operations, but rather trying to stop the spread of violent extremism. Their mission is to support the priorities of the Ambassador and the geographic combatant commander's theater campaign plan against terrorist networks.**

**Q: Please describe the potential value of these special operations personnel to CENTCOM and the country teams they are supporting.**

Our Special Operations Forces (SOF) are the best in the world and are a key component in maintaining the USG's access into a host nation, and advancing interoperability with the host nation's military. These objectives are aligned with the Ambassador's overarching engagement strategy and the activities of the country team. They excel when operating in the strategic environment under austere conditions, and are particularly adept in keeping a small footprint on the ground. These characteristics make them particularly useful and valuable in our Theater engagement strategy, and a given when responding to crisis in the region.

**Q: If confirmed, what, if anything, do you intend to do to make sure the goals of special operations personnel deployed to these countries are closely aligned with those of the Ambassadors with whom they are working?**

If confirmed, it would be my responsibility to ensure that our operations and activities are aligned and integrated into the Ambassador's country specific objectives and our National Security objectives. I recognize that my relationships with the Chiefs of Mission in the region will be critical to achieving necessary unity of effort. I will charge my subordinate SOF commanders at all levels to keep their lines of communication open with their respective Chiefs of Mission.

## **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.**

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

Our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have taught us that to achieve our goals and objectives we must balance all instruments of national power. The complexity of the current operating environment requires a whole of government approach that leverages the individual strengths of the Interagency, to include our military and diplomatic partners and others. Unity of effort, based on a ‘team of team’ concept, is essential. We must identify common goals and objectives early on and work together to achieve them.

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

The nature of warfare today requires unity of effort. As such, I believe we should look to expand our collaboration with our Interagency partners to include all stages of planning and operations. We must not wait until we are in the midst of crises. By working together on a routine basis, we will effectively align goals and objectives, improve communications and enhance the understanding of one another’s methods and perspectives. This will ultimately enhance individual and USG effectiveness.

**Q: How can the lessons learned in recent years be captured in military doctrine and adopted as “best practices” for future contingency operations?**

Lessons learned from COCOM, CJOA, and unit/tactical level activities should be communicated to the Services for incorporation into professional military education, for civ-mil structural recommendations, and for inclusion in the next revisions of Joint and Service-level doctrine.

## **Unified Command Plan Changes**

**It has been reported that Admiral McRaven, Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), is seeking changes to the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and other authorities that he believes would allow USSOCOM to better support the requirements of the Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). Reportedly, such changes would give the Commander of USSOCOM combatant command authority over the TSOCs – including responsibilities for resourcing – and provide for more rapid deployment of special operations forces to and between Geographic Combatant Commands without the requirement for approval by the Secretary of Defense in every case. Operational control of deployed special operations forces would reportedly remain with the respective Geographic Combatant Commander. Some have expressed concern that such**

**changes could raise problems related to civilian control of the military, infringe upon the traditional authorities of the Geographic Combatant Commanders, and make it more difficult for Ambassadors and Geographic Combatant Commanders to know what military personnel are coming into their areas of responsibility and what they are doing while they are there.**

**Q: Please provide your assessment of whether such UCP changes are appropriate and can be made without conflicting with civilian control of the military, infringing upon authorities provided to the Geographic Combatant Commanders, or raising concerns with the State Department.**

If confirmed, I will review all recommended changes to the UCP. However, it has been my experience that Special Operations Forces are most effectively employed when fully integrated with conventional forces. This integration ensures better coordination, unity of effort and the ability to share critical resources.

**Q: In your view, are there any countries that should be added or removed from the CENTCOM AOR as part of the review of the UCP?**

I believe the current Area of Responsibility effectively and efficiently facilitates accomplishment of the CENTCOM assigned missions. If confirmed, I will continuously assess the CENTCOM missions and AOR and propose realignment if future conditions warrant.

### **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.**

**Q: What is your assessment of this authority?**

Section 1208 authority provides authority and funds for U.S. SOF to train and equip regular and irregular indigenous forces to conduct counterterrorism operations. This authority is considered a key tool in combating terrorism and is directly responsible for a number of highly successful counter-terror operations. Throughout the CENTCOM AOR 1208 facilitates multiple joint operations between Theater and National SOF partnering with host nation forces. These 1208 funded operations create capable responsive host nation forces closely partnered with U.S. SOF and represent the best opportunity to counter terrorist activities that threaten U.S. interests.

### **Military Information Support Operations**

**Al Qaeda and affiliated violent extremist groups work hard to appeal to local populations.**

**In several cases throughout the CENTCOM AOR, most recently in Yemen, these efforts have allowed violent extremists to establish a safe haven, conduct operations, and expand their recruiting base. The composition and size of these groups in comparison to the U.S. Government permits it to make policy decisions very quickly.**

**Q: Do you believe CENTCOM and other agencies within the U.S. Government are appropriately organized to respond effectively to the messaging and influence efforts of al Qaeda and other affiliated terrorist groups?**

Al Qaeda exploitation of the information environment continues to mature and is a decisive part of the al Qaeda Senior Leader's campaign. And, while I'm not currently in a position to assess USG MISO capabilities, I recognize that CENTCOM must be able to dominate the information environment and ensure we do not unwittingly cede the information battle-space to the enemy.

**Q: What steps, if any, do you believe CENTCOM should take to counter and delegitimize violent extremist ideologies?**

CENTCOM plays a significant role in countering and delegitimizing violent extremist ideologies by eroding recruitment, reach, fundraising and communication capabilities through military information support and coordinated interagency operations.

### **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.**

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

**Q: 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.

**Q: 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.