

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for Mr. Louis Bremer
Nominee for Appointment to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

Duties and Qualifications

Section 138(b)(2) of title 10, U.S. Code, establishes the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)) as one of only 13 Assistant Secretaries of Defense in the Department of Defense (DOD).

1) What is your understanding of the duties and responsibilities of the ASD(SOLIC) as prescribed in current law, DOD issuances, and by practice?

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)) is the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity conflict matters. The ASD(SOLIC)'s principal duty is overall supervision (to include oversight of policy and resources) of special operations and low-intensity conflict activities of the DoD. The ASD(SOLIC) also is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations capabilities and authorities, counternarcotics efforts and resources, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, strategies for building partner capacity, and stability operations in accordance with the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy's priorities and guidance. Additionally, the ASD(SOLIC) is in the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), performing a "service secretary-like" function for the special-operations peculiar administrative matters relating to organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces.

2) What background and experience do you possess that qualify you to perform the duties and responsibilities of the ASD(SOLIC)?

For the past 20 years, I have been providing investment capital, strategic advice and fiduciary oversight to companies that are critical to our nation's security. Most recently, my investing activities have focused on companies that provide revolutionary technologies and capabilities—including cyber security, hypersonics, undersea sensors and unmanned systems—that are fundamental to our ability to compete and win against near-peer adversaries. Through this experience, I have developed a keen awareness of how technology is shaping the battlefields of today and its likely effect on the future.

As the Chairman of the Board of two companies and a Director of several others, I have functioned as a fiduciary and exercised broad oversight of corporate strategy and operations, including organizational structure, hiring, setting of budget priorities and establishing strategic partnerships. Not only have I developed deep domain expertise in these areas, but I also have learned to "pressure test" the status quo to ensure that each process or decision is optimized to achieve the greatest outcome.

Prior to my career as an investor, I served for eight years in the special operations community as a Naval Special Warfare (SEAL) Officer, completing operational tours at SEAL Team 3 and SEAL Team 8, including Commanding a SEAL Platoon in Bosnia-Herzegovina during Operation Joint Forge. Through this experience, I learned of the collective capabilities of our Special Operations Forces and the demands of service on our warfighters and their families.

If confirmed, I have the requisite standing and credibility in the community to be an effective change agent. I will bring these critical skillsets and understanding to the SOF enterprise as it leads the fight in our global counterterrorism efforts while increasing its relevancy to the threats of great power competition consistent with the National Defense Strategy.

3) In particular, what expertise do you possess in the specific domains of:

- **Exercising responsibilities for matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of military forces, particularly with regard to Special Operations Forces.**
- **Developing strategy, doctrine, and tactics, particularly with regard to Special Operations Forces.**
- **Preparing and submitting to the Secretary of Defense program recommendations and budget proposals and exercising control over the expenditure of appropriated funds.**
- **Validating requirements and establishing priorities for requirements.**

As a former Naval Special Warfare officer and SEAL Platoon Commander, I was directly responsible for the organization, training and equipping of SEAL forces. Moreover, as a SOF leader, I was involved in the constant refinement of special operations strategy and tactics at the tactical unit level.

As a member of the Board of Directors of numerous companies, I am intimately involved in the validation of requirements and the resourcing and prioritization of those requirements. In this capacity, I also exercise oversight of the budget process to ensure that funds are allocated to strategic priorities and expended consistent with intent and prior authorization.

4) What leadership and management experience do you possess that you would apply to your service as ASD(SOLIC), if confirmed?

I have led elite special operations forces on the battlefield and Fortune 100 corporate executives in the boardroom over a 28-year career in government and the private sector. As a White House Fellow, I worked across the interagency to drive national security priorities. As a philanthropist, I have served on the Boards of numerous non-profits with both domestic and international mandates. And as a member of the SOF community who cares deeply about our warriors and their families, I co-founded the Navy SEAL Foundation. The Foundation has raised over \$100 million to provide the Naval Special Warfare force and their families with a comprehensive set

of programs specifically designed to improve health and welfare, build and enhance resiliency, empower and educate families and provide critical support during times of illness, injury, loss and transition. If confirmed, I look forward to applying the leadership skills honed through these varied experiences in my service as ASD(SOLIC).

5) Do you believe that there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to serve as the ASD(SOLIC)? Please explain your answer.

I have reviewed the duties, responsibilities, and the history of the office, but such a review falls short of the insights that would be gained from performing in the role. If confirmed, I will continue to evaluate the functions of the office and engage with the Secretary and, as necessary, with Congress on any recommendations to improve the operations of ASD(SOLIC). As a professional, I am in constant pursuit of personal excellence with the humility to know that this objective will never be fully complete.

6) If confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you make to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) regarding changes to the organization, management, and resourcing of the Office of the ASD(SOLIC), so as better to execute its responsibilities for oversight of and advocacy for Special Operations Forces?

ASD(SOLIC) fills a unique role within the Department, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense for special-operations administrative matters while supporting the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy for policy-related matters. In order to provide the most effective oversight of and advocacy for SOCOM and the best advice to the Secretary of Defense and USD(P), ASD(SOLIC) should be organized in a manner consistent with the existing and emerging priorities of the Department and SOCOM under the NDS. My preliminary assessment is that an organizational review is warranted.

As an example, irregular warfare is an Annex to the National Defense Strategy, elevating its importance to our national security in the age of great power competition as state and non-state actors struggle for legitimacy and influence over populations. As stated in the UNCLASS Annex to the NDS, “Implementation of the Annex will have significant impact on the Joint Force including organizing, training, equipping, generating, and employing forces along with educating, developing, and managing personnel.”

Despite this emphasis, information warfare appears to lack a commensurate level of organizational representation within ASD(SOLIC); instead, its functions reside within Special Operations and Combatting Terrorism (SOCT). In an era of great power competition, our ability to achieve our national security objectives by, with and through regular and irregular forces, groups and individuals—while leveraging the power of information—may be the difference between low intensity conflict and escalation to total war. The importance of irregular warfare cannot be overstated.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the fulfillment of my duties and in the assessment of the organizational structure of ASD(SOLIC).

- 7) Are there any additional authorities or resources that, in your view, would enhance your ability to perform the duties and functions of the ASD(SOLIC), if confirmed?**

If confirmed and upon having the opportunity for a fuller evaluation, I will engage the Secretary of Defense and the Congress on any recommendations for additional authorities that would enhance the functions and statutory requirements of ASD(SOLIC).

Relationships

- 8) If confirmed, what would be your relationship with, and on what issues would you expect to engage with:**

The Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense

If confirmed, I will perform the duties as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on all special operations matters, including the employment of Special Operations Forces (SOF) to achieve U.S. national security objectives and the oversight responsibilities related to organizing, training and equipping the SOF enterprise. I will advise and assist the Secretary on U.S. counterterrorism strategy and operations and the use of the instruments of irregular warfare. I will offer policy guidance and advice on information operations, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping operations, detainee policy, and efforts to combat narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime. If confirmed, I also will keep the Deputy Secretary of Defense apprised of these matters and work closely with the Deputy on any potential reorganizational efforts and other administrative matters.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

If confirmed, I will work closely with and advise the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy on ASD(SOLIC)-related equities and policy matters, ensuring they are well-understood and consistent with DoD priorities and objectives. I will keep the Under Secretary informed of major developments within the ASD(SOLIC) portfolio, including operational matters that may have an effect on policy development or outcomes. Additionally, I will work closely with the Under Secretary on any potential reorganizational efforts within ASD(SOLIC).

The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S))

Since the days of the Office of Strategic Services in World War II, special operations activities and the intelligence that enables them have been inextricably connected. The current USD(I&S) is a former Naval Special Warfare teammate and friend whom I hold in very high regard. If confirmed, I will seek to establish a close working relationship with the Under Secretary for the betterment of the SOF enterprise.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

Advanced technologies are critical to the enablement of special operations in an era of great power competition. If confirmed, I will establish a close working relationship with the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering in an effort to accelerate the adoption of Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, unmanned systems, smart munitions and weaponry, new communications modalities, and other revolutionary technologies into the SOF enterprise.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment

The United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) exercises acquisition authorities in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. If confirmed, I will establish a close working relationship with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment regarding special operations acquisition programs.

The Under Secretary of Defense for Comptroller

If confirmed, I will establish a close working relationship with the Under Secretary of Defense for Comptroller to ensure United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) financial management meets the department's guidance and direction.

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

If confirmed, I will work with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities to ensure special operations capabilities are applied properly in defense strategies and plans.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Advising the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity conflict matters requires close coordination and collaboration with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman, and the Joint Staff. Furthermore, coordination and alignment is imperative to the resourcing and oversight of special operations forces. If confirmed, I plan to establish a close relationship with the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Service Chiefs

Special Operations Forces (SOF) do not exist independently of the Military Departments and Military Services, and SOF rely on Service support in many areas, including resourcing of service-common requirements. SOF readiness also is affected by policies and programs of the Military Departments including those for education, promotion, and force design. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Service Chiefs in these cross-cutting areas and to ensure adequate support to SOF.

The Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)

It's critical that the ASD(SOLIC) and the Commander, USSOCOM have a seamless partnership and shared vision in pursuit of our national security priorities and in support of the SOF enterprise, our service members and their families. Building trust will require frequent, transparent and candid communication across a myriad of issues affecting SOLIC and USSOCOM. If confirmed, I am committed to working with the Commander to not only provide effective and constructive oversight but also the strong advocacy necessary to produce the world's best and most capable special operations forces today and in the future.

The other Combatant Commanders

The Combatant Commands plan and oversee joint military operations within their assigned areas of responsibility. Geographic Combatant Commands levy requirements for the quantity and type of SOF to achieve their theater objectives and maintain operational control of forces assigned to their areas of responsibility. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Combatant Commanders to ensure they have the SOF support necessary to achieve their mission objectives.

The Commanders of the Service Special Operations Component Commands

The Commanders of the Service Special Operations Component Commands have a critical role in organizing, training and equipping service special operations forces. If confirmed, in collaboration with the Commander, USSOCOM, I will seek their input on the current status of their forces, as well as their vision and anticipated needs for the future.

9) If confirmed, specifically what actions would you take to develop and sustain an open, transparent, and productive relationship between your office and Congress, and the Senate Armed Services Committee, in particular?

The Congress, and the SASC in particular, has been a strong advocate for the office of ASD(SOLIC). If confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD(Legislative Affairs) to build upon this foundation for the betterment of the SOF enterprise in partnership with the Committee.

Major Challenges and Priorities

10) If confirmed, what would be your vision for the Office of the ASD(SOLIC)?

My vision of ASD(SOLIC) is that of a high-functioning, collaborative, mission-driven organization that provides differentiated advice to the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary for Policy, transparency to the Congress, and world-class advocacy and oversight to USSOCOM. If confirmed, I will endeavor to fulfill this vision in the performance of my duties as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity capabilities and authorities, detainee affairs, counter-narcotics efforts and resources, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, strategies for building partner capacity, and stability operations. Additionally, if confirmed, I will provide prudent oversight of special operations and low-intensity conflict policy and resources as the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, USSOCOM, performing a "service secretary-like" function for the special-operations peculiar administrative matters relating to organization, training, and equipping of SOF.

11) In your view, what are the major challenges that you would expect to confront if confirmed to be the ASD(SOLIC)?

Counterterrorism has dominated the activities of USSOCOM since 9/11, and in those intervening years the Command has organized, trained and equipped with a principal focus on this mission set—and it has delivered a best-in-class return on investment for the nation and the U.S. taxpayer.

We now have entered a new era defined by great power competition and the stakes are much higher. The capabilities that USSOCOM must develop to have a meaningful deterrent effect on our near-peer adversaries—and a dominant effect in the event of armed conflict—require significant and sustained efforts across all aspects of organizing, training and equipping and doctrinal development. This requires unity of vision, assumption of measured risk, speed of execution and a clear roadmap that guides the strategy and steps to achieve success. Importantly, these efforts must occur alongside current counterterrorism operations.

The office of ASD(SOLIC) must be adequately staffed to handle the increased requirements and complexity of this new era as well as the service-like secretary responsibilities delineated in 922 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Commander, USSOCOM to address these challenges head-on while also partnering to assess any critical capability or funding gaps which limit USSOCOM's ability to meet the complex and dynamic challenges of our current and future threats to national security.

12) If confirmed, specifically what management actions would you take, in what order of priority, and on what timeline—to address each of these challenges?

If confirmed, I will immediately partner with the USSOCOM Commander's efforts to transform the force consistent with the requirements of the National Defense Strategy. This will include a detailed review of our current posture and capabilities and an assessment of what actions and resources are required to maximize the Command's effectiveness in the age of great power competition. I will address any identified challenges or shortfalls through an integrated approach, incorporating inputs from key stakeholders within the Department, USSOCOM and Congress, as appropriate.

If confirmed, I also will work with the Secretary and USD(P) to provide world-class advice, oversight and advocacy in the pursuit of our national security objectives and in support of the SOF enterprise. This will include an assessment of ASD(SOLIC)'s organizational structure to ensure it is optimized for the Department's priorities under the National Defense Strategy.

National Defense Strategy

The 2018 NDS moved beyond the “two-war construct” that has guided defense strategy, capability development, and investment for the past three decades, and refocused

DOD on a framework that prioritizes “great power competition and conflict” with China and Russia as the primary challenges with which the United States must contend, together with the imperative of deterring and countering rogue regimes like North Korea and Iran. Finally, the framework emphasizes the consolidation of gains in Iraq and Afghanistan, while moving to a “more resource sustainable” approach to counterterrorism.

13) In your view, does the 2018 NDS accurately assess the current strategic environment, including the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies? Please explain your answer.

Yes. The NDS provides clear prioritization of threats and a directed focus on deterrence through readiness and threat management. The NDS also emphasizes that the Department of Defense must continue to address the threat from terrorism in a sustainable manner. It is my view that this is the right assessment relative to the challenges of the current strategic environment.

14) In your view, are the plans and programs of the Commander, USSOCOM appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to counter the threats and achieve the national security objectives identified by the NDS?

If confirmed, I will examine USSOCOM’s plans and programs to evaluate whether USSOCOM is sufficiently resourced and organized to carry out its mission effectively for the Department and the Nation. If resourcing, organizational, or force structure changes are warranted to support the NDS, I will work closely with the Commander, USSOCOM, the Department, and with the Congress to ensure that they are thoroughly and expeditiously addressed.

15) What is your assessment of the risk the Commander, USSOCOM has accepted regarding the readiness of Special Operations Forces to execute the operational plans associated with the 2018 NDS?

It is my understanding that ASD(SOLIC) receives frequent recurring updates from the Commander of USSOCOM on SOF readiness. If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating these readiness reviews in regards to DoD operational plans to ensure our SOF posture is consistent with the NDS.

16) If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you advise the Commander, USSOCOM to make in the command’s implementation of the NDS?

It is my understanding that ASD(SOLIC) and USSOCOM have a robust dialogue on the role of SOF in addressing NDS priorities. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts by engaging with the Commander of USSOCOM in a meaningful, collaborative way to ensure USSOCOM and SOF have the capabilities, resources and focus to maximize SOF effectiveness under the NDS.

17) Are the Special Operations Forces of each of the Military Services appropriately sized, structured, and postured to implement the 2018 NDS and the associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

I understand that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 called for an independent assessment of the force structure and roles and responsibilities of SOF. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the assessment and inputs from commanders and staff to ensure SOF are postured to meet the requirements of the operational plans associated with the NDS.

18) How would you assess the current readiness of each Service special operations component—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute the NDS?

It is my understanding that ASD(SOLIC) receives frequent recurring updates on USSOCOM readiness. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander, USSOCOM, to ensure that USSOCOM is able to address current operational requirements while simultaneously preparing for enhanced requirements consistent with the NDS.

19) In your view, what is the role of the Office of the ASD(SOLIC) in overseeing implementation of the NDS by USSOCOM?

ASD(SOLIC) must clearly communicate policy objectives and parameters set by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to USSOCOM, and separately provide oversight of and advocacy for USSOCOM.

20) If confirmed, what would you do if you determine that USSOCOM cannot meet the demands placed on it by the 2018 NDS?

If confirmed and if I made such a determination, I will seek to clearly identify the root causes and work expeditiously to resolve those issues through appropriate channels. My current understanding is that USSOCOM continues to meet all of its mission requirements and has made steady progress towards enhanced capabilities and its goals for sustainable dwell time for the force.

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

I believe the trend towards long-term global strategic competition as described in the unclassified synopsis of the NDS is accurate, and that our ability to successfully address the threats posed by near-peer adversaries can be the difference between competition and total war. Deterrence through preparation is the key. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the classified version of the NDS and participating in the Department's implementation efforts. I will focus on ensuring SOF are ready and relevant.

The 2018 NDS is grounded in three lines of effort: building a more lethal force, strengthening alliances and partnerships, and reforming the department for better business practices. Shortly after he was appointed to be Secretary of Defense in July 2019,

Secretary Esper added a fourth line of effort: taking care of service members and ensuring the welfare and well-being of their families.

22) What do you view as the major challenges facing USSOCOM in regard to this fourth line of effort?

Special Operations Forces have endured the highest operational tempo of any DoD component since 9/11. The impact of sustained combat and repetitive, lengthy deployments on our special operators and their families has been immense and remains a persistent challenge. Increasing dwell time for special operations personnel while increasing programmatic support is imperative. It is my understanding that USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Family initiative and associated programs have helped SOF and their families cope with certain unique challenges that are not otherwise addressed by the Service deployment support programs.

23) From your perspective, how can the Office of the ASD(SOLIC) enhance USSOCOM's progress in addressing these challenges?

If confirmed, I will advocate for USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Family program and look for other opportunities to provide additional support for the wellbeing of SOF and their families.

Alliances and Partnerships

Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to U.S. success in competition and conflict against a great power. To this end, the 2018 NDS stresses the importance of strengthening existing U.S. alliances and partnerships, building or enhancing new ones, and promoting "mutual respect, responsibility, priorities, and accountability" in these relationships.

24) If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to strengthen existing U.S. alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage new opportunities for international cooperation—in regard to Special Operations Forces and related missions?

Special Operations Forces support the NDS by strengthening relationships with allies and partners and expanding the competitive space against strategic competitors through presence, engagements, and discrete activities. I believe the optimum pathway to global stability is working by, with, and through our foreign partners to leverage force multipliers and interoperability. If confirmed, I will ensure the unique tools possessed by SOF are used to strengthen existing alliances and form new ones in support of the NDS.

Budget

In its 2018 report, the National Defense Strategy Commission—supported by then-Secretary of Defense Mattis and Chairman Dunford—recommended that Congress increase the base defense budget at an average rate of three to five percent above inflation through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP). However, the President's Budget for

FY 2021 requests for Special Operations Command reflects *negative real growth* as compared to the FY 2020 defense budget.

25) Do you believe that DOD and USSOCOM require 3-5% real budgetary growth through the FYDP to implement the 2018 NDS effectively? Please explain your answer.

I agree with that premise and support an annual increase in the DoD topline to reflect that. The Department also has a limited topline to balance across the Military Department and Defense-Wide accounts to resource the Department's priorities under the NDS. The NDS emphasizes business reform as a strategic priority to maximize cost effectiveness, which I understand is what USSOCOM did for the FY 2021 President's Budget as part of the Defense-Wide Review. If confirmed, I will support growth in the resources available to USSOCOM for SOF-peculiar requirements where it aligns with the NDS. I also will work with USSOCOM to ensure we maximize the return for every dollar we are given.

26) If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of USSOCOM funding going forward?

If confirmed, I will measure the adequacy of USSOCOM funding relative to requirements and results. Funding should be sufficient to adequately resource the organization, training, and equipping necessary to support USSOCOM's mission requirements and its most important asset – its people. Further, I will measure adequacy of funding relative to USSOCOM's ability to address NDS priorities, maintain operational readiness, and modernize the force. USSOCOM excels at putting additional funding to productive use, which is why I will continue to support the submission of a report on unfunded priorities consistent with title 10, U.S. Code, section 222a. At all times, I will endeavor to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars by eliminating waste, reducing red tape, and cutting ineffective programs.

Section 222a of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that not later than 10 days after the President's submission of the annual defense budget to Congress, each Combatant Commander must submit to the congressional defense committees a report that lists, in order of priority, the unfunded priorities of his or her command.

27) If confirmed, what role would you play in the USSOCOM Commander's generation and submission of his unfunded priorities list to Congress?

It is my understanding that ASD(SOLIC) reviews the proposed submission and actively participates in the USSOCOM process to prioritize requirements. If confirmed, I will continue to support that collaborative approach and look forward to engaging with USSOCOM on that report following the FY 2022 President's Budget submission.

Civilian Control of the Military

In its 2018 report, *Providing for the Common Defense*, the National Defense Strategy Commission cautioned, "there is an imbalance in civil-military relations on critical issues of

strategy development and implementation. Civilian voices appear relatively muted on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy.”

28) What is your view of the essential role of the ASD(SOLIC) in promoting civilian control over the military?

The ASD(SOLIC) must clearly articulate strategic priorities and policies to Commander, USSOCOM, and provide oversight of and advocacy for special operations resources. The ASD(SOLIC) must also ensure that the Secretary of Defense has all the necessary, resource-informed policy recommendations to exercise his control of the military, including SOF. It is therefore essential to maintain a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the Commander of USSOCOM to ensure the best possible civilian-military advice is provided to the Secretary on the resourcing and employment of SOF. If confirmed, I intend to exercise my statutory authorities to further this objective.

The National Defense Strategy Commission report also states, “. . . allocating priority—and allocating forces—across theaters of warfare is not solely a military matter. It is an inherently political-military task, decision authority for which is the proper competency and responsibility of America’s civilian leaders.”

29) Do you agree with the Commission’s recommendation that “the Secretary of Defense and USD(P) . . . [must] fully exercise their responsibilities for preparing guidance for and reviewing contingency plans?” Please explain your answer.

Yes, I agree with the Commission’s recommendation. Effective military action requires clear policy guidance to shape deliberate and crisis action contingency planning. It is my understanding that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy have statutory responsibility to provide guidance on the preparation and review of contingency and campaign plans. ASD(SOLIC) has a clear responsibility to participate in the process to develop policy for special operations aspects of plans.

30) Specifically what would you do, if confirmed, to ensure that the USD(P) is properly prepared to engage fully in preparing guidance for and reviewing contingency plans involving Special Operations Forces and capabilities?

If confirmed, I will review the processes by which the Department of Defense formulates policy guidance and priorities for special operations. I will work to ensure that the capabilities of SOF are analyzed rigorously, developed collaboratively, aligned to standing strategy, and articulated clearly.

Civilian Oversight of the U.S. Special Operations Command

Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA empowered the ASD(SOLIC) to serve as the “service secretary-like” civilian official with responsibility for the oversight of and advocacy for Special Operations Forces. Among other reforms, the law defined the administrative chain of command for USSOCOM as running through the ASD(SOLIC)

to the Secretary of Defense for issues impacting the readiness and organization of Special Operations Forces, special operations-peculiar resources and equipment, and civilian personnel management, mirroring the relationship between the Secretaries of the Military Departments and their service chiefs, and placing ASD(SOLIC) immediately subordinate to the Secretary of Defense in such “service secretary-like” matters.

31) What is your understanding of the administrative chain of command specified by Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA?

Section 922 of the NDAA for FY 2017 codified the position of the ASD(SOLIC) in the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, USSOCOM, responsible to exercise authority, direction, and control of all special operations-peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of SOF. This codification strengthened the civilian oversight role of ASD(SOLIC) in a manner to resemble more closely the responsibilities of the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

32) If confirmed, how would you seek to exercise the administrative chain of command and under what circumstances?

If confirmed, I will seek to exercise ASD(SOLIC)’s role in the administrative chain of command in a seamless manner through consistent, constructive and transparent communication with the Commander of USSOCOM to ensure we have alignment on priorities consistent with current operational requirements and the NDS.

33) If confirmed, how would you distinguish between and balance the duties and responsibilities associated with the ASD(SOLIC)’s “service-secretary-like” role with the ASD(SOLIC)’s duties and responsibilities related to special operations policy and operational issues?

The ASD(SOLIC)’s administrative and policy duties are equally critical. The former is important to maximizing the future efficacy of the force, and the latter ensures SOF are ready to support the President and Secretary on current matters. If confirmed, I will endeavor to balance these duties, prioritizing as necessary relative to pressing requirements, in close coordination and collaboration with the Commander of USSOCOM.

34) What is your understanding of the role of the ASD(SOLIC) in:

- **The formulation and submission of USSOCOM’s annual budget request.**

I understand that ASD(SOLIC) receives fiscal guidance from the Chief Management Officer (CMO) and provides fiscal guidance to USSOCOM. Additionally, ASD(SOLIC) reviews and approves USSOCOM’s Future Years Defense Program Objective Memorandum.

- **Approving programs of record and the acquisition of special operations-peculiar capabilities by USSOCOM.**

USSOCOM has statutory authority for development and acquisition of special operations-peculiar equipment. I understand that the ASD(SOLIC) participates in the USSOCOM process to establish acquisition programs as a member of the USSOCOM requirements board.

- **Overseeing the organization of USSOCOM headquarters and service components.**

ASD(SOLIC), as the senior civilian in the Department responsible for Special Operations, must work in partnership with the USSOCOM Commander to implement a shared vision for a SOF enterprise that meets the Nation's special operations requirements. If confirmed, I will participate in strategic engagements and processes with USSOCOM and the service components that will further sustain and advance the SOF enterprise.

- **Ensuring the readiness of Special Operations Forces.**

Under Section 167 of Title 10 U.S. Code, ASD(SOLIC) is responsible for exercising authority, direction, and control of all special operations-peculiar administrative matters relating to the readiness, organization, training, and equipping of SOF. These responsibilities include the exercise of administrative oversight for readiness and the organization of SOF resources, equipment, and military and civilian personnel.

- **Actions relating to the culture, ethics, and accountability of Special Operations Forces.**

As the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations, the ASD(SOLIC) should play an active role in partnership with the Commander of USSOCOM to ensure Special Operations Forces conduct themselves at all times in a manner commensurate with the level of trust the public places in them in the performance of their duties. If confirmed, I will work closely with Commander of USSOCOM regarding ethics and accountability of SOF. I also will support the swift implementation of the recommendations of the Comprehensive Review of SOF Ethics to ensure that ethics and accountability are institutionalized across the SOF enterprise.

35) In your view, do existing law and DOD policy and guidance provide sufficient clarity regarding how and in whom responsibility and accountability vest for all matters affecting Special Operations Forces? If not, what changes would you recommend?

In my view, the law is clear on ASD(SOLIC)'s role as the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity conflict matters and the role in the administrative chain of command of the Commander, USSOCOM. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Secretary of Defense, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and the Commander of USSOCOM, to fulfill these statutory requirements and in advocacy for our Special Operations Forces. If confirmed, I will evaluate any potential changes required to existing law that would be appropriate to clarify responsibility and accountability for special operations matters.

36) In your view, does the extant administrative chain of command allow for any

official below the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense to exercise authority, direction, and control over the ASD(SOLIC) with regard to his/her “service secretary-like” responsibilities?

Unless otherwise directed by the President, the administrative chain of command to USSOCOM for the specific purposes set forth in 10 U.S.C. 167(f)(2) runs (A) from the President to the Secretary of Defense; (B) from the Secretary of Defense to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict; and (C) from the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict to the Commander of USSOCOM. If confirmed, I will keep the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy informed on matters affecting ASD(SOLIC).

Use of Military Force

37) If confirmed, what factors would you consider in making recommendations to the Secretary of Defense and the USD(P) on the operational use of Special Operations Forces?

There is no more solemn responsibility than decisions involving the operational employment of American forces, including SOF. If confirmed, I will give careful consideration to any contemplated use of military force, especially the operational use of SOF. The use of SOF should be reserved for missions that require SOF-unique skills. In addition to considering the positive and negative implications of SOF employment—including force protection—I also will consider any potential legal or ethical factors of such action. I will confer with relevant experts in the Department of Defense and USSOCOM in the formulation of such recommendations.

38) Are you satisfied that current legal authorities, including the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, enable the Department to carry out counterterrorism operations and activities at a level you believe to be necessary and appropriate?

Yes, it is my understanding that the current legal authorities for counterterrorism operations are appropriate and sufficient.

39) What groups are currently assessed to be associated forces of al Qaeda for purposes of the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, and in what countries are U.S. military direct action operations against such groups authorized?

It is my understanding that the Executive Branch has determined that the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force applies to al-Qa’ida; the Taliban; certain other terrorist or insurgent groups affiliated with al-Qa’ida and the Taliban in Afghanistan; al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula; al-Shabaab; al-Qa’ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb; al-Qa’ida in Syria; and ISIS. It is my understanding that the United States has used military force for counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya. I also am aware that U.S. forces have used armed force in self-defense in Niger.

40) In your view, is a “new” authorization for the use of military force needed at this time—particularly as regards counterterrorism? Please explain your answer.

No. The President does not require a new or revised AUMF. The President has sufficient legal authority for the fight against the Taliban, al-Qa'ida and their associated forces, including against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

41) What factors would you consider, if confirmed, in recommending to the Secretary of Defense and USD(P) which forces of other nations should be eligible for collective self-defense by U.S. Special Operations Forces, and under what conditions?

An important consideration in deciding whether to authorize the use of force to defend foreign forces is whether the foreign forces are working alongside U.S. forces in operations to counter a common adversary or potential adversary. Working with and fighting alongside partners that share U.S. interests are critical elements of our National Defense Strategy.

42) Are there circumstances in which you believe it appropriate for U.S. Special Operations Forces to be under the operational command or control of an authority other than the chain of command established under title 10, U.S. Code?

If confirmed, I will review the circumstances where SOF may be under the operational command or control of an authority other than the title 10, U.S.C., chain of command, and determine whether any such control is appropriate under the law and for the intended purpose.

43) What do you perceive to be the appropriate role and missions of U.S. Special Operations Forces in “gray zone” operations short of war?

U.S. SOF bring a variety of tools to address asymmetric warfare across the spectrum of conflict, chief among them the flexibility and mental agility to understand and operate in ambiguous, complex, and asymmetric environments. SOF are valuable for maintaining relationships that allow for placement and access in priority areas and provide options for Combatant Commanders in the event of crisis. SOF also possess critical skills and training necessary to illuminate malign actors and activities that threaten the United States and allies below armed conflict, and when needed create dilemmas for and challenge the strategies of potential adversaries.

Civilian Casualties

Section 936 of the NDAA for FY 2019 required the Secretary of Defense to develop a comprehensive policy for accounting for and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations.

44) If confirmed, what would be your role in developing and implementing the policies resulting from Section 936?

If confirmed, I will support the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in fulfilling his current responsibilities as the Department's civilian official designated under Section 936 to develop, coordinate, and oversee policy compliance relating to civilian casualties resulting from U.S.

military operations. Working to protect the lives of innocent civilians helps our forces achieve mission objectives, earn and maintain the support of partner governments and vulnerable populations, and enhances the legitimacy of U.S. military operations that are critical to national security.

45) What role do you believe public transparency plays with respect to accounting for and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

It is essential to educate the public regarding the purpose of U.S. military operations, what they achieve, and the associated human benefits or costs.

46) Do you believe DOD has achieved a sufficient level of transparency on such matters? If not, what additional steps do you believe are necessary?

It is my understanding that DoD routinely provides the media and the public information about its operations, publicly releases information regarding efforts to mitigate harm to civilians during military operations and about civilian casualty incidents, and engages with representatives from civil organizations on these and related topics. It also is my understanding that the Department has taken significant steps in recent years to enhance its transparency on these issues. Nevertheless, if confirmed, I will assess if there are ways that ASD(SOLIC) can further inform this process as it relates to SOF activities.

Authorities of Commander, USSOCOM

In recent years, the Secretary of Defense modified policy guidance to give the Commander, USSOCOM responsibility for resourcing, organizing, and providing guidance to the Theater Special Operations Commands of the Geographic Combatant Commanders and Special Operations Forces assigned to them.

47) If confirmed to be the ASD(SOLIC), what role would you play in ensuring that the SOCOM Commander's exercise of these authorities does not conflict with civilian control of the military, infringe on the statutory authorities provided to the Geographic Combatant Commanders, or overreach authorities reserved to other government agencies?

The ASD(SOLIC) supports the Secretary of Defense and provides recommendations regarding special operations that are in the best interest of the Department. The ASD(SOLIC) provides policy oversight of USSOCOM's mission planning and Geographic Combatant Commanders' employment of SOF to ensure compliance with law and DoD priorities. If I am confirmed, I will endeavor to communicate frequently with the Commander of USSOCOM on these authorities.

48) Do you believe USSOCOM is appropriately resourced to adequately support the Theater Special Operations Commands and the Special Operations Forces assigned to them?

My current understanding is that the Department has adequately resourced USSOCOM. If confirmed, I will develop an informed view on this issue and make it a priority to ensure the men and women serving in the Theater Special Operations Commands and the Special Operations Forces assigned to them have the requisite resources to accomplish assigned missions.

Special Operations Missions

49) Do you believe the special operations activities identified in section 167 of title 10, U.S. Code, remain relevant and appropriate?

Yes.

50) What changes, if any, would you recommend?

It is critical that ASD(SOLIC), in partnership with the Commander of USSOCOM, guard against mission creep within the SOF enterprise. SOF missions, by definition, should be those that require special skills or capabilities that general purpose forces do not provide. If confirmed, any recommendations I would bring forward regarding changes to special operations activities identified in section 167 of title 10, U.S. Code, would be framed through this lens and serve to enhance our special operations capabilities in a manner that provides the most effective and sustainable force for our nation.

51) Are there special operations missions or activities that you believe should be transferred to conventional forces or, otherwise divested by USSOCOM, and, if so, why?

I am currently unaware of any current special operation mission or activity that needs to be divested. If confirmed, I will constantly assess the requirements of the SOF enterprise and ensure that only those mission sets that cannot be performed effectively or expeditiously by general purpose forces remain the purview of SOF. In general, SOF are better suited to operate in politically sensitive locations and with a lighter footprint. As operational conditions change over time, it may become more appropriate for missions initially assigned to SOF to transition to conventional forces.

52) Are there any additional missions or activities that you believe should be assigned to USSOCOM? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I am committed to the principle of ensuring SOF are used only for those missions for which they are best suited, and will provide advice to the Secretary of Defense on the appropriate use of SOF.

Future of Special Operations Forces

53) In your view, what are the major challenges facing U.S. Special Operations Forces in the near-, mid-, and long-term?

The NDS succinctly prioritizes long-term strategic competition with China and Russia as well as sustained deterrence against the rogue regimes in Iran and North Korea. SOF have a very important role in all four of these problem sets. To be most effective, USSOCOM will have to increase its asymmetric capabilities in the domain of irregular warfare and leverage a “by, with and through” approach when actionable to amplify its global activities and undermine aggressive actions on behalf of China and Russia. Great power competition will be the defining national security challenge of our generation.

SOF have to increase their focus on requirements under the NDS relative to great power competition while simultaneously addressing the continued threats of terrorism in accordance with the NDS’s fifth priority. Work to optimize the use of SOF resources should remain a persistent line of leadership effort.

I am concerned about the health of our force and the hidden impacts of sustained combat deployments on our warfighters and their families. If confirmed, I will champion the efforts of the Preservation of the Force and Family program and will seek to identify other ways that we can ease the burden on USSOCOM’s most important asset—its people.

54) In your assessment, are U.S. Special Operations Forces appropriately organized, trained, and equipped to address these challenges? What changes, if any, would you recommend to the organization, training, and equipping of U.S. Special Operations Forces?

It is clear we must find more resource-sustainable ways to continue countering violent extremist threats; this decades-long effort has stressed the force. I believe that we can achieve a more cost-effective, sustainable approach to counterterrorism to allow for necessary modernization efforts and additional investments for SOF’s increased requirements under the NDS. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure that SOF are organized, trained, and equipped appropriately to meet the priorities of the NDS.

55) How would you prioritize your efforts to ensure that U.S. Special Operations Forces are postured to effectively confront these challenges?

If confirmed, my priorities will align with the NDS: irregular warfare reforms to enable successful great-power competition short of conflict; continuing to prevent terrorists from threatening the U.S. homeland, U.S. citizens, and U.S. interests; continuing global counter-weapons of mass destruction efforts; and building SOF’s readiness and lethality for potential conflict.

56) In your view, what should be the role of the ASD(SOLIC) in identifying and implementing efforts regarding the organization, training, and equipping of U.S. Special Operations Forces?

If confirmed, the organization, training, and equipping of U.S. Special Operations Forces will be a priority focus in my oversight of USSOCOM.

Combatting Terrorism

57) What is your view of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and the role of USSOCOM in supporting that strategy?

The U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy is an effective, whole-of-government approach for integrating military and non-military efforts to combat the threat of terrorists at home and abroad. The strategy recognizes that today's terrorist landscape is more fluid and complex than ever. The United States must be adaptive to its approach in countering and preventing terrorism. I understand that USSOCOM plays a key role in this process as the Department's Coordinating Authority to unify counterterrorism planning across DoD. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we are focusing on the appropriate lines of effort.

58) How would you assess the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy in addressing the threat posed by Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs)?

As an investor, I assess strategy through the data that are produced by the operations set forth under the strategy. Measuring trends in data provides insight into the efficacy (or lack thereof) of lines of effort. If confirmed, I'll make the assessment of the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy a top priority, leveraging all relevant and available data in the process.

59) What changes, if any, would you recommend to the strategy or associated measures of effectiveness?

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the measures of effectiveness to work to ensure that the strategy is producing the desired outcomes.

60) What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al Qaeda, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and other VEOs, to the U.S. homeland, and western interests, more broadly? Which group or groups, in your view, currently present the greatest threat to the United States?

Al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) present an enduring threat to U.S. citizens at home and abroad. Our national interests, and those of our partners and Allies, will remain threatened until these adversaries cease to exist.

My current understanding is that ISIS and al-Qa'ida still present the most serious terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests abroad. If confirmed, I will work to understand fully the capabilities and intentions of these organizations to assess the risk they pose to the United States.

61) In your view, what does a "more resource sustainable" approach to counterterrorism, as directed by the NDS, mean?

In my view, a "resource sustainable approach" consists of: (1) effective operational progress against the most threatening terrorist groups, (2) efficient use of limited DoD resources, and (3) working by, with and through partners and proxies to achieve intended outcomes. These are

achieved by rigorous threat analysis, clear policy objectives, written priorities, and standardized assessments of progress, all unified by Secretary of Defense-approved guidance.

62) If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to promote a “more resource sustainable” approach to counterterrorism?

If confirmed, I will lead a collaborative and transparent effort, in coordination with the Commander, USSOCOM and other key officials, to develop Departmental guidance and priorities for counterterrorism operations, activities, and investments. I also will work to integrate military counterterrorism operations into the whole-of-government approach and with the efforts of allies and partners.

63) How would you endeavor to manage risk under this “more resource sustainable” approach?

If confirmed, it will be my responsibility to provide overall supervision and justification of SOF programs and the budget for USSOCOM that are sustainable in a resource-constrained environment. I will manage strategic risk through a whole-of-government approach to countering terrorism, and operational risk by working closely with the Commander, USSOCOM, and other Combatant Commanders, as necessary.

Detention Operations

64) If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in addressing matters regarding detention under the law of armed conflict?

If confirmed, I will be fully engaged in addressing all matters regarding policy and guidance on detention under the law of armed conflict.

65) Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, *The Department of Defense Detainee Program*, dated August 19, 2014?

If confirmed, I will fully support the standards for detainee treatment provided in the Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, and in DoD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program. Individuals in the custody or control of the U.S. Government may not be subjected to any interrogation technique or approach, or any treatment related to interrogation, that is not authorized by and listed in the Army Field Manual.

66) If confirmed, what role would you play in the ongoing triennial review and revision of FM 2-22.3 mandated by the NDAA for FY 2016?

If confirmed, I will be fully engaged in the triennial review of FM 2-22.3 to ensure that it meets all applicable legal requirements, and that the practices for interrogation described therein do not involve the use or threat of force in accordance with Section 1045 of the National Defense

Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92).

67) Are there certain policies or processes set forth in FM 2-22.3 that in your view are in particular need of revision? Please explain your answer.

If confirmed, I will thoroughly review the policies and processes set forth in FM 2-22.3 to determine if any revisions may be required.

Section 1046 of the FY 2020 NDAA established the position of Chief Medical Officer of U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay and charged the Chief Medical Officer to oversee the provision of medical care to individuals detained at Guantanamo.

68) What is your understanding of the role of the ASD(SOLIC) in cases in which the Commander, Joint Task Force-Guantanamo declines to follow the Chief Medical Officer's determinations relating to medical care to be provided a detainee?

Section 1046 of the NDAA for FY 2020 provides that there shall be a Chief Medical Officer who will be assigned and report to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, with duty at U.S. Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay. In cases in which the Commander, Joint Task Force-Guantanamo, declines to follow a determination of the Chief Medical Officer relating to medical care to be provided a detainee, the matter covered by such determination shall be resolved by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA)), in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC)), not later than seven days after receipt by both Assistant Secretaries of written notification of the matter from the Chief Medical Officer.

Intelligence Operations

69) How are responsibilities for the oversight of the intelligence activities and programs of Special Operations Forces delineated between the Office of the USD(I&S) and the Office of the ASD(SOLIC)?

I understand that the Secretary of Defense designated the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security (USD(I&S)), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD SOLIC), and the Department of Defense Senior Intelligence Oversight Official as oversight officials in their respective chartering directives. These three officials and their offices share oversight responsibilities for all SOF intelligence and intelligence-related activities and programs.

I believe strengthened coordination among and between these offices helps to ensure that the United States is best postured to deal with threats. If confirmed, I will work to ensure defense intelligence activities adhere to appropriate coordination processes with their Policy counterparts.

70) Are there any programs currently overseen by the Office of the USD(I&S) that would be more appropriately overseen by ASD(SOLIC), in your view?

If confirmed, I intend to work with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security to identify the most appropriate division of responsibility for specific programs.

71) In your view, how are intelligence operations carried out by Special Operations Forces different from those carried out by others in the Intelligence Community?

I've been out of the Special Operations community for twenty years so my SOF-related intelligence experience is dated. If confirmed, I will review the current missions, tactics, techniques, and procedures for intelligence operations carried out by SOF to develop an understanding of the differences.

72) If confirmed, how would you ensure that intelligence activities carried out by Special Operations Forces are properly coordinated with activities carried out by the Intelligence Community?

If confirmed, in order to deconflict intelligence activities carried out by SOF and the Intelligence Community, I will establish relevant relationships and lines of communication across the Department and interagency. I will ensure that intelligence activities carried out by SOF are coordinated with all appropriate entities in accordance with established law, policy, and doctrine.

Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

73) What is your assessment of the threat posed by WMD to the United States?

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) continue to be a significant threat to the homeland and U.S. forces, allies, partners, and interests abroad. It is my understanding that specific terrorist groups have expressed their intent and taken action to acquire, develop, and use WMD against the United States and its allies.

74) What is your understanding of USSOCOM's responsibilities under the Unified Campaign Plan for synchronizing the Department's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction?

It is my understanding that USSOCOM is the lead agency for synchronizing the Department's efforts to counter weapons of mass destruction. Additionally, it is my understanding that the Commander, USSOCOM is tasked with providing the Secretary of Defense with recommendations regarding priorities and the allocation of resources to counter WMD. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Commander, USSOCOM to ensure these requirements are met and that our SOF are fully organized, trained and equipped to meet this critical national mission.

10 U.S.C. 127e Operations

Section 127e of title 10, United States Code, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) by U.S. Special Operations Forces to regular

forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations to combat terrorism.

75) What is your assessment of the value of this authority?

In my view, it is extremely valuable. The authority to support foreign and irregular forces engaged in activities that support U.S. counterterrorism operations abroad provides a low cost, small footprint mechanism to achieve U.S. objectives. This is particularly helpful given the resource demands of great power competition.

76) What is your assessment of the efficacy with which this authority has been utilized in the past?

From my limited knowledge of the program, the Section 127e authority seems to be a very effective tool for U.S. SOF to conduct counterterrorism operations with and through foreign and irregular partner forces.

Irregular Warfare

Nation states are becoming more aggressive in challenging U.S. interests through the use of asymmetric means that often fall below the threshold of conventional conflict, commonly referred to as irregular warfare and “gray zone operations.”

77) What is your understanding of the threat to U.S. interests posed by adversaries in the domain of irregular warfare?

Adversaries of the United States understand our strengths and intentionally attempt to exploit what they perceive to be U.S. weaknesses. They purposely avoid triggering what they perceive to be the U.S. threshold for a conventional military response. They use coercive diplomacy, predatory economic actions, and witting and unwitting proxies to build their influence, degrade U.S. interests, and erode U.S. advantages outside the context of armed conflict.

78) What should be the guiding principles of any DOD strategy to counter threats in the “gray zone,” in your view?

I believe that the Department of Defense must prioritize understanding and operating in the “gray zone” with the same rigor and dedication that guides our military’s war planning and investments in high-end capabilities. America’s adversaries choose to operate in the gray zone, and, if confirmed, I will work to redouble our efforts to meet—and compete—in that space.

79) What do you perceive to be the appropriate role for Special Operations Forces in executing such a strategy?

I believe that a DoD strategy for operations in the “gray zone” should emphasize that the *entire* Joint Force has a role beyond maintaining conventional deterrence in the area of competition short of armed conflict. I would expect SOF to apply their proven abilities to work by, with, and

through allies and partners, achieve an understanding of the operating environment, and create strategic dilemmas for our adversaries. SOF should *also* educate conventional forces and increase the Joint Force's proficiency in irregular warfare, understanding the gray zone, and how to compete below armed conflict.

80) What is your assessment of the value of the "Section 1202" authority for support of special operations for irregular warfare? What modifications, if any, would you recommend to the "section 1202" authority?

It is my view that execution of the 1202 authority should deliver outsized results to meet discrete objectives and impose costs on our adversaries for a very small investment. If confirmed, I look forward to learning how this authority is being applied, and with what results. If a high return on investment is evident, I will recommend increased investment in this authority over time.

81) Do you believe that Special Operations Forces have the appropriate authorities and capabilities to operate effectively in this domain of warfare? Please explain your answer.

It is my belief that SOF have the capabilities and are well suited to operate effectively in this domain. If confirmed, I will review the adequacy of relevant authorities.

82) If not, what additional authorities and capabilities do you perceive to be necessary, and why?

If confirmed, I will review the adequacy of relevant authorities.

Special Operations Enabling Capabilities

Special Operations Forces rely extensively on enabling capabilities provided by Military Service general purpose forces to ensure mission success.

83) What is the role of the ASD(SOLIC) in ensuring that the special operations requirements for enabling capabilities are properly articulated to and provided by the Military Services?

It is the fifth SOF truth that most special operations require non-SOF assistance. Major Force Program-11 reflects only SOF-unique requirements; I understand that the other Military Departments and Defense-Wide organizations provide another \$9.5-\$10 billion annually in support USSOCOM. This includes military personnel, materiel, and base operating support. The ASD(SOLIC) must be conscious of SOF dependencies on general purpose forces and Defense Agencies. If confirmed, I will work with the Commander, USSOCOM, to integrate into relevant processes to ensure adequate support to SOF by general purpose forces.

84) In your view, should Special Operations Forces further develop organic enabling capabilities, in addition or in place of those currently provided by general purpose forces?

I understand that SOF rely on the general purpose forces for certain enabling capabilities; however, there are times when SOF's unique mission set requires an enabling capability to be organized within SOF. I believe that each case should be decided on the basis of the unique requirements for that enabling capability.

Information Operations

85) In your view, are the Department and the broader interagency appropriately organized to compete with state and non-state adversaries in the information environment? If not, what recommendations would you make?

I understand that the Department is engaged, working within assigned portfolios, and collaborating with other relevant departments and agencies. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for the proper structure responsible for the synchronization of all information related capabilities across the department to best achieve NDS objectives. I also will make information operations a key focus during my tenure.

86) What is the appropriate role of the Department and, specifically, Special Operations Forces, in the broader information operations and strategic communications efforts of the U.S. Government?

The Department's capabilities complement and reinforce U.S. Government efforts to wield information power. Per Section 167 of Title 10 US Code, Military Information Support Operations (MISO) is defined as a special operations activity. The role of SOF in MISO continues to be effective in supporting DoD and the broader USG in achieving goals in the information environment.

MISO are integrated into other Department capabilities to inform and influence audiences via the Commanders Communication Synchronization Strategy. This synchronization provides a comprehensive and harmonized approach to both information operations and strategic communications for the Joint Force.

87) What role should the USSOCOM's Joint MISO WebOps Center play in supporting these efforts?

I understand that the Department's position to be that USSOCOM organized the Joint MISO WebOps Center to host the capability to support MISO that are funded and conducted by individual Geographic Combatant Commands. I understand that the Center is working and growing, and if confirmed, I will continue to support this important capability.

88) Should Special Operations Forces develop any additional military capabilities to enable the DOD and the United States to compete more effectively in the information environment? Please explain your answer.

Success in the information environment requires an integrated approach among a broad spectrum of participants. If confirmed, I will assess USSSCOCOM's capabilities in this area and ensure it continues to be a meaningful part of the effort to create and deliver timely solutions to warfighters. I will continue to focus on needs, speed of delivery, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Counternarcotics

The ASD(SOLIC) is responsible for coordinating and overseeing plans, programs and policies pertaining to counternarcotics (CN).

89) What is your assessment of the threat posed to the United States by drug trafficking and related activities of transnational criminal organizations?

In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that more than 67,000 people in the United States died from drug overdoses, mainly from heroin and fentanyl. The threat to U.S. national security posed by illicit drugs extends beyond traditional challenges and directly impacts public health and safety. Many of our nation's adversaries, including nation-states, non-state actors, and violent extremist organizations (VEOs), depend on proceeds generated from drug trafficking and other illicit activities to fund their operations.

90) Given the evolution in recent decades of criminal networks, shifts in demand for different illegal drugs, and the unabated growth of drug trafficking, how would you characterize the Department's success in the CN mission to date?

Illicit drug trafficking remains a serious problem that presents an evolving set of challenges. However, my understanding is that the Department of Defense's counterdrug efforts have helped law enforcement interdict billions of dollars in illicit drugs, keeping them out of our country and keeping the revenue they would have provided out of the hands of illicit networks intent on doing us hard.

91) What do you view as the proper role of the Department in supporting interagency partners tasked with counternarcotics missions, such as the Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security?

As I understand it, DoD is the lead Federal agency for the detection and monitoring of illicit drugs bound for the United States in the air and maritime domains, and DoD leverages its specialized military capabilities and expertise in support of U.S. and foreign law enforcement partners to help disrupt drug-trafficking networks.

92) If confirmed as ASD(SOLIC), how would you delineate the unique CN support that DOD can provide from the types of support other agencies are better suited to offer?

I understand that DoD leverages its inherent military capabilities and expertise in support of U.S. and foreign law enforcement partners to help disrupt illicit networks that threaten U.S. national

security interests and to prevent dangerous drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and fentanyl from entering our country. If confirmed, I will endeavor to keep DoD's role within this defined focus.

93) In your opinion, does the Department of Defense have sufficient subject matter expertise on Counter Threat Finance to be able to properly execute that part of the CN mission?

Attacking the financial support of our adversaries, both state and non-state, is an important capability. It is my understanding that DoD provides intelligence and analytical support to the counter threat finance efforts of the Department of the Treasury as well as other law enforcement agencies. This analysis supports not only counterdrug activities, but also efforts to counter terrorism and counter transnational organized crime activities. If confirmed, I will continue to assess DoD's counter threat finance capabilities in support of the National Defense Strategy and interagency efforts to counter transnational organized crime.

Special Operations Command Acquisition Authorities

Section 167(e)(4) assigns to the Commander, USSOCOM the authority to develop and acquire special operations-peculiar equipment, and to acquire special operations-peculiar material, supplies, and services. The Commander, USSOCOM is advised and assisted in these matters by a command acquisition executive.

94) If confirmed, what criteria would you apply in validating a determination that a particular requirement for equipment, materiel, supplies, or services is "special operations-peculiar"?

Making accurate determinations is a critical part of the NDS line of effort to "Reform the Department for Greater Performance and Affordability." Along this line, key criteria for "special operations-peculiar" requirements would be to ensure it meets a validated operational requirement and does not duplicate an existing service-common requirement.

95) If confirmed as the ASD(SOLIC)—

- What actions would you take to improve each of the three aspects of the special operations-peculiar acquisition process—requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?**

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to be fully integrated in USSOCOM's acquisition, requirements, and budgeting processes. I believe it is critical to build a solid relationship with the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the Services, USSOCOM, and other relevant bodies to help inform requirements decisions. Through the annual Planning, Programming, and Budget Execution process, I will be able to ensure that USSOCOM's priorities and resource allocation are in alignment with the Department's strategic objectives and executed as efficiently as possible.

- **What actions would you propose, if any, to ensure that special operations-peculiar requirements are realistic, technically achievable, and prioritized?**

If confirmed, I will ensure the office of the ASD(SOLIC) actively participates in venues such as the Special Operations Command Requirements Evaluation Board. Additionally, I will seek validation of technical achievability and prioritization through ongoing oversight and intense data development.

96) Are there other roles or responsibilities in the acquisition process that should be assigned to the ASD(SOLIC) or the Commander, USSOCOM, in your view?

If confirmed, I will fulfill the statutory responsibilities of ASD(SOLIC) in the administrative chain of command of the Commander, USSOCOM, including with respect to the acquisitions process. Should I identify any changes to authorities or processes to improve the functions of the office, I will engage within the Department and with the Congress as necessary with appropriate recommendations.

A natural tension exists between the objectives to ensure that acquisition programs reduce cost and accelerate schedule and the need to ensure performance meets requirements and specifications—the objective of the test and evaluation function.

97) What are the respective roles of the ASD(SOLIC) and the Commander, USSOCOM in the test and evaluation of special operations-peculiar acquisition programs? If so, how would you exercise the responsibilities of the ASD(SOLIC), if confirmed?

I understand USSOCOM has a number of test and evaluation programs unique to SOF and uses some non-traditional test and evaluation strategies. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the materiel USSOCOM fields to SOF are deployment-ready. I will also work with the USSOCOM Acquisition Executive to ensure test plans and procedures are developed and executed responsibly and effectively.

98) How has the Commander, USSOCOM made use of rapid acquisition, spiral acquisition, and other evolutionary acquisition processes?

The Commander, USSOCOM, and his Acquisition Executive leverage a wide range of acquisition processes in order to facilitate rapid prototyping and fielding to the warfighter. USSOCOM has been a strong advocate and user of the Middle Tier of Acquisition pathway and many of the non-traditional acquisition processes referred-to as “other transaction authorities.” These help to streamline the actual time from idea to a fielded materiel solution in the hands of SOF. If confirmed, I will make it my priority to ensure that I am fully integrated with USSOCOM acquisition process.

Ethics and Accountability

In January 2020, USSOCOM completed a Comprehensive Review of Special Operations Forces Culture and Ethics. Among other things, the Comprehensive Review found that “selective implementation” of recommendations from four previous reviews

related to the culture and ethics of Special Operations Forces since 2011, including two such reviews mandated by Congress, have resulted in continued challenges related to the assessment and selection of Special Operations Forces, leader development, and force structure and employment.

99) What are your views on the current culture of ethics and accountability in U.S. Special Operations Forces?

From what I understand, the Comprehensive Review initiated by Commander, USSOCOM, found that there is no systemic ethics and accountability problem within the special operations community. The Comprehensive Review identified other factors as contributing to instances of bad decision making. It is clear that USSOCOM's long-term commitment and focus on ethics and accountability is intact, and I was particularly pleased to see that the enterprise-wide institutional changes recommended in the Comprehensive Review are already being implemented.

100) If confirmed, what would be your role in implementing the recommendations of the USSOCOM Comprehensive Review?

If confirmed, I will work closely with Commander, USSOCOM, to ensure the special operations enterprise continues to implement the Comprehensive Review's recommended actions with the same speed and discipline as are the hallmarks SOF operations. I also will keep the SASC informed of progress until completed.

The USSOCOM Comprehensive Review found that "a USSOCOM culture overly focused on force employment and mission accomplishment creates the contexts or situations allowing for misconduct and unethical behavior to develop within the SOF enterprise."

101) What role, if any, should past mission accomplishment play in decisions relating to misconduct by Special Operations Forces?

Those found to have committed misconduct should be held accountable. Past acts of valor do not excuse misconduct.

Health of Special Operations Forces

High operational tempo and demand for special operations capabilities have contributed to enormous strain on Special Operations Forces, which is challenging readiness, resilience, and retention. Tragically, there were 22 suicides in Special Operations Forces in 2018 and 21 in 2019.

102) What is your assessment of the health and readiness of Special Operations Forces?

Special operations forces face unique and persistent challenges regarding readiness, resilience and retention. If confirmed, I will look to evaluate the effectiveness of existing readiness and force-support programs to ensure their adequacy.

103) If confirmed, what will be your priorities in addressing the stress on Special Operations Forces?

If confirmed, I will reinforce USSOCOM's initiative to embed behavioral health providers in special operations units. These providers are vital in the continuing effort to promote preventative stress management and reduce suicides in the special operations community. We must also continue to study and address the effects of the stress of repeated combat deployments and the long-term effects of brain injuries on the mental health of military members.

104) If confirmed, what steps will you undertake to address suicides in Special Operations Forces?

I understand that USSOCOM has been implementing preventative and proactive suicide prevention programs in addition to the suicide prevention training and programs of the respective Services. If confirmed, I will work with the Commander, USSOCOM, and the DoD Suicide Prevention Office to help USSOCOM sustain and evolve its suicide prevention efforts by implementing best practices and innovative research and technologies.

105) What is your understanding of the USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Families program?

Since its inception in 2013, the Preservation of the Force and Families program has been instrumental in strengthening SOF readiness and resiliency through a holistic approach to the well-being of SOF members and their families. The POTFF program is designed to help special operators and their families cope with SOF-unique challenges that cannot be addressed through programs of the Services alone. The program supports human performance, psychological health, family readiness, and spiritual grounding.

Sexual Harassment

In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, approximately 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gender discrimination by "someone at work" in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

106) If confirmed, what actions would you take were you to receive or otherwise become aware of a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination from an employee of the Office of the ASD(SOLIC)?

Sexual harassment and discrimination have absolutely no place in DoD. If confirmed and made aware of such a complaint, I would follow established laws and DoD guidelines and policies for proper handling of the report. My goal would be to continue to forge a professional environment

that is safe and equitable for all employees in my office, one that is free from intimidating, hostile, or abusive conduct by anyone.

Congressional Oversight

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

107) If confirmed, how would you work with the Commander of USSOCOM to ensure the appropriate committees of Congress receive timely responses to inquiries and that such responses are appropriately coordinated between the Office of the ASD(SOLIC) and USSOCOM?

If confirmed, I am fully committed to uphold a constructive relationship with the Congress. I will work closely with the Commander of USSOCOM to ensure we have a joint process to provide coordinated, responsive, and accurate information to the Congress.

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

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

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

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

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

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

111) Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective

staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer yes or no.

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

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

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

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

Yes; in accordance with applicable laws and long-standing Department and Executive Branch practice.

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

Yes; I agree to protect DoD personnel from unlawful retaliation.