

Advance Questions for Vice Admiral Craig S. Faller, USN
Nominee for Commander, United States Southern Command

Duties and Qualifications

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U. S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)?

Title 10 U.S.C and 2017 Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishes U. S. SOUTHCOM's (SOUTHCOM) missions, responsibilities, and geographic area of responsibility (AOR). SOUTHCOM is a unified Combatant Command responsible for contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation for Central and South America and the Caribbean. The latter encompasses 31 countries, 16 dependencies, and areas of special sovereignty in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

The Commander U.S. Southern Command directly reports to the Secretary of Defense, communicating through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs for assigned missions and is responsible for: detecting, deterring and preventing attacks against the United States including specifically Defense of the Panama Canal and Canal area; building and enhancing regional security partnerships; and being the principal USG point of contact on military matters pertaining to the AOR enabling interagency and DoD counterparts to advance U.S. influence and interests.

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

I am humbled to be considered for confirmation as Commander, United States Southern Command. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing my 35 years of experience as a military officer to this position. My career has included three joint assignments at two different Combatant Commands – U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Central Command – at which I saw firsthand the true benefit of jointness, interagency cooperation and partners and allies.

I have also benefited greatly from the knowledge and insight I have gained across the full spectrum of the Department's missions and operations in my current position as the Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. My time as a legislative fellow in the office of Senator Edward Kennedy, as well as, serving as the Chief of Legislative Affairs for the Secretary of the Navy was particularly enlightening and allowed me to gain a thorough understand of our legislative branch.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the SOUTHCOM Commander?

As a leader, I believe it is imperative to constantly learn from a wide variety of experiences, experts (in and out of government and defense) and literature. If confirmed, I also look forward to tapping the phenomenal expertise of the men and women of the United States Southern Command, many of whom have decades of experience in Latin America and the Caribbean. I will also look to engage others throughout the U.S. Government, private sector and academia, who bring a variety of perspectives on the region. Finally, I look forward to engaging directly with our partner nations in the region to learn firsthand about their culture, history and security challenges. I intend to make it a personal goal to become conversant in both Spanish

and Portuguese. The majority of the countries in our hemisphere are very willing partners with whom we share strong democratic values. We also share common challenges and threats that require shared solutions and I am confident that I will learn much from their insights.

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. Southern Command, to the following:

The Secretary of Defense

The Commander performs his duties under the authority and direction of the Secretary of Defense. He is responsible for executing the military missions directed by the President and the Secretary of Defense and for exercising command authority over the forces assigned by the Secretary of Defense. The Commander is directly responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the ability of the Command to carry out its mission.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense performs duties delegated by the Secretary and performs the Secretary's duties in his absence. The Commander ensures the Deputy has the information necessary to perform his duties and coordinates with him on major issues.

The Under Secretaries of Defense

Although the Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Under Secretaries of Defense, it is important that the Commander communicate regularly with the Under Secretaries on strategic and regional security issues, as appropriate.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense and serves as the key communication link between the Combatant Commanders, the Secretary of Defense and the President. The Chairman's role as global integrator is integral to addressing SOUTHCOM's challenges and opportunities. The Vice Chairman performs the duties prescribed by the Chairman, and performs the Chairman's duties in his absence. To enable the Chairman and Vice Chairman to perform their respective roles and duties, the Commander of SOUTHCOM routinely provides information to the Chairman and Vice Chairman on significant events and issues in the Command's AOR.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs, but regularly coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues related to homeland defense and Western Hemisphere security.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC), but regularly exchanges information and coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues of mutual concern and interest. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for many of the activities conducted every day within the SOUTHCOM AOR, including counterterrorism, information operations, the Department of Defense counterdrug program, detention policy, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs

The Service Secretaries are responsible for administration and support to the forces assigned to the combatant commands. The Service Chiefs are responsible for organizing, training, and equipping forces in their respective departments for assignment to the Combatant Commands. The successful execution of SOUTHCOM's mission responsibilities requires coordination with the Service Chiefs. As a result, the Commander regularly communicates with them and coordinates on issues of mutual concern and interest, working closely with them to understand service capabilities, convey combatant command requirements, and effectively employ service capabilities to successfully conduct SOUTHCOM's mission.

The other Combatant Commanders, particularly U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM)

Due to the global nature of threats, the Commander maintains an exceptionally close relationship with other Combatant Commanders, especially with the Commander of U.S. Northern Command. The Combatant Commanders are in frequent communication, maintaining a shared perspective on trans-regional threats, coordinating on issues of mutual concern, sharing information, and preventing or removing any gaps or seams along regional boundaries.

U. S. Chiefs of Mission within the U. S. Southern Command area of responsibility (AOR)

The Commander does not have a formal relationship with the Chiefs of Mission but communications and coordination between SOUTHCOM and the Chiefs of Mission is constant. The U.S. Ambassador is responsible for directing and supervising all U.S. government activity in the host nation, with the exception of U.S. military activities under the direction and coordination of the Combatant Commander. If confirmed, I will ensure all security cooperation activities in the region are fully coordinated with the Ambassador and country team and work together to achieve our shared national security objectives. I will rely on the counsel of the Civilian Deputy to the Commander at SOUTHCOM for foreign policy advice and synchronization and coordination with Chiefs of Mission and the Department of State. I will also continue the SOUTHCOM tradition of hosting annual sub-regional conferences with the Chiefs of Mission to exchange perspectives and gain regional insight.

Implications of the National Defense Strategy

The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) states that “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security” and focuses particularly on the security challenges posed by Russia and China. The NDS also states that one of the United States’ defense objectives is maintain a favorable regional balance of power in the Western Hemisphere. Given the resource-intensive nature of great power competition, carrying out the NDS will require the Secretary of Defense and combatant commanders to carry out missions efficiently and make hard choices – including in AORs such as SOUTHCOM which prior commanders have identified as an “economy of force” combatant command.

If confirmed, how do you plan to support the objectives of the National Defense Strategy in the context of the SOUTHCOM AOR, particularly with respect to great power competition?

The National Defense Strategy has three primary lines of effort: 1. Build a more lethal force, 2. Strengthen alliances and attract new partners and 3. Defense reforms. If confirmed, I will focus foremost on the second line of effort, strengthening existing priority partnerships, while looking to build new security partnerships. Under the first line of effort, I will ensure that SOUTHCOM and all of our components are the best in the business for planning, operations, exercises, security cooperation, and readiness to conduct contingencies such as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR), defense of the Panama Canal or non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO). Underlying this must be an intense internal education program where every SOUTHCOM team member is steeped in the culture and the history, in addition to, possessing expert level of knowledge in warfighting and security assistance programs. Finally under the third line of effort, SOUTHCOM must account for every dollar and man-hour spent, constantly looking for ways to innovate, experiment, and learn.

Spanning all three lines of effort is the concept of expanding the competitive space. As for great power competition, one of the best ways to do this is to remain proactive, persistent and present in the region starting with renewed emphasis on intel and info sharing and education and training programs. Our U.S. military education system, much like our national higher education system, is the best in the world. Expanding educational opportunities for partner nations will pay long-term dividends in building trust and confidence in U.S. institutions and ideals. Trust is the essential framework for our strong partner relations and is essential to countering great power competition in the Hemisphere.

Given that great power competition is resource-intensive, how would you define SOUTHCOM’s essential missions in the AOR and what steps would you take to accomplish them with greater efficiency?

As I understand it, SOUTHCOM’s essential mission in the AOR is to secure the southern approaches to the United States, protecting U.S. interests in Central and South America and the Caribbean, while reducing threats extending from or through the region into the U.S.. Securing the southern approaches to the United States depends upon stemming the flow of illicit narcotics

into the U.S., preventing illegal migration, and identifying and preventing terrorists and other criminals from entering the country. Key to doing so is partnering with regional nations and U.S. government agencies to foster safer, more secure, conditions for citizens throughout the region. Additional missions include defense of the Panama Canal; HA/DR, Force Protection, Security Cooperation, NEO, and acting as the single point of contact on security matters in the AOR.

Unity of effort is essential to accomplishing these objectives, and effective integration and cooperation between DoD elements and other U.S. governmental agencies cannot be assumed. We must work on this each and every day as it is foundational for increasing efficiency.

Effective strategic communication reinforces our actions and values and is necessary to accomplishing our missions with greater efficiency.

Additionally, I believe SOUTHCOM must expand information/intelligence sharing; increase the education and training exchange opportunities; better align security, development, and capacity building activities to achieve long-term gains; and better leverage and integrate existing activities and assets to support achieving results.

The NDS's Global Operating Model and Dynamic Force Employment concepts emphasize sustaining capabilities for major combat, while "providing options for proactive and scalable employment of the Joint Force."

In your assessment, how will this differ from current models of employment of force?

Deterring global competitors requires dynamic and unpredictable force employment and deployment from single individuals to larger units and forces. Coupled with persistent, predictable, reliable day-to-day, human-to-human partnerships, force employment forms the basis of trusted regional relationships. Not all-dynamic force employment should be considered under the framework of aircraft carriers and bombers. Employment of our human capital through education, training, ideas and ideals can also be dynamic and is foundational to all mission sets from major operations to HA/DR. People matter, as much, if not more than force-on-force employment.

Playing to our strength in mobility and logistics across the strong U.S. military joint team, we can deploy forces from small teams of trainers to larger exercise forces on short notice. Our strong cultural and professional military education, integrated with our partner network demonstrates our commitment to would be adversaries. Leveraging dynamic force employment with all our components and service partners introduces operational unpredictability and changes the decision-making calculus of our adversaries. Our National Guard State Partnerships can play a foundational role here. The concept of dynamic force employment ties directly into expanding the competitive space and is not business as usual.

How do you intend to work with the Services to implement these concepts while balancing the need to rebuild readiness?

In line with the 2018 National Defense Strategy, rebuilding readiness is a top priority for the Department of Defense. The SOUTHCOM AOR offers diverse training environments in close proximity to the United States. If confirmed, I would work with the Services to leverage the SOUTHCOM AOR for air and maritime training deployments to include ship transits. This could provide mutually beneficial opportunities for the Services to increase readiness, and SOUTHCOM to offset its minimal force allocation. For instance, training deployments in support of SOUTHCOM detection and monitoring efforts not only greatly enhance USG drug interdiction efforts, they also provide a unique training opportunity against an intelligent and adaptable adversary.

Major Challenges, Problems, Priorities

If confirmed as the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, you will be responsible for all military operations in that region. These include operations supporting homeland defense and security, counter-narcotics efforts in source and transit countries, responses to natural disasters, detainee operations at Guantanamo Bay, and the development of democratic values within the militaries of the region, among others.

In your view, what are the major challenges and problems you would confront if confirmed as the next Commander of SOUTHCOM?

The major challenges in the region include: Russian and Chinese efforts to expand influence; criminal, extremist and other threat networks that traffic in drugs, weapons, humans, and illicit goods and undermine partner nation sovereignty and security; nations that do not follow democratic ideals and norms; mass migration and the region's persistent vulnerability to natural disasters and other crises. In addition to these challenges, I would be responsible for detainee operations at JTF-GTMO, a mission that SOUTHCOM has been directed to execute for the foreseeable future.

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

If confirmed, I will continue to execute SOUTHCOM's primary mission of securing the southern approaches and working with partners in the U.S. government to advance security, economic prosperity, and regional stability. I will also ensure the continued safe, humane, and legal care and treatment of detainees at Joint Task Force Guantanamo by examining the infrastructure needs of the facility and addressing any shortfalls, to include the need for new military construction projects. As appropriate, I will encourage bilateral and multilateral training exercises to deepen interoperability with key strategic partners; strengthen defense cooperation and civil-military coordination on shared challenges like disaster response, countering criminal and terrorist networks, and stemming illicit flows of drugs and other goods; and seeking opportunities to expand engagement on human rights, professional military exchanges (IMET and other education/training), and defense institution building. I note here the important role that schools such as the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC); Inter

America Air Force Academy (IAAFA); Inter America Defense College (IADC) and the William J. Perry Center play in developing relationships and building trust.

If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish and how would you define success and failure in your core missions in tangible terms?

I will maximize the use of all available resources and explore innovative partnerships and new technologies and techniques to enhance SOUTHCOM's operations. I will prioritize the development of creative and non-traditional approaches, facilitate improved information/intelligence sharing with partner nations, and improve SOUTHCOM's ability to compete in a complex environment. In my view, SOUTHCOM's success should be defined by the success of others: how well the command enables the Departments of State, USAID, Homeland Security, Treasury, and others to advance U.S. interests in Latin America and the Caribbean. Failure, in tangible terms, would be SOUTHCOM's inability to deter or manage a crisis or defeat a threat to our homeland emanating from Latin America or the Caribbean.

If confirmed, how would you work to ensure that DOD efforts in your AOR complement the efforts of civilian agencies?

As I understand it, one of SOUTHCOM's key strengths is its strong, collaborative relationships with other U.S. government agencies. Expanding competitive space requires combined actions with the U.S. interagency and the Congress, and a seamless integration of multiple elements of national power. I would build on SOUTHCOM's strong interagency foundation by expanding collaborative planning and better integrate and align military, diplomatic, development, and law enforcement activities.

Relations with Congress

What are your views on the state of U.S. Southern Command's relationship with the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?

I believe that the relationship between SOUTHCOM and the Senate Armed Services Committee is strong. This is not something I will take for granted – relationship never remain the same. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to strengthen this already positive working relationship. My goal is that SOUTHCOM will be the committee's first call if there are any questions about the security of this region.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and U.S. Southern Command?

If confirmed, I pledge to personally engage the committee members and staff on a regular basis to ensure open lines of communication. I also welcome congressional delegations to the SOUTHCOM Headquarters in Miami, as well as, its subordinate commands, joint task forces, and security cooperation offices throughout the area of responsibility. I believe that the best way to understand the challenges and opportunities in an area is to walk the ground and see it firsthand.

Torture and Enhanced Interrogation Techniques

23. 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, and required by section 1045 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 (Public Law 114-92)?

Yes.

DOD Counter-narcotics 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 \$1.0 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. Much of this funding is directed towards the SOUTHCOM AOR.

24. In your view, what is the appropriate role of DOD – and by extension SOUTHCOM – in U.S. counterdrug efforts?

I understand that SOUTHCOM, via the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S), executes the DoD statutory mission to detect and monitor aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs bound for the United States in support of interdiction by law enforcement agencies. The Command also supports U.S. and partner nation drug law enforcement activities through information fusion and exchange, training, minor infrastructure support, and equipping.

25. How would you measure the effectiveness of U.S. and DOD counter-narcotics programs?

The most visible, but perhaps not the most effective, measure is the amount of drugs seized or disrupted. Although the prevention of hundreds of tons of illicit drugs from entering the country is critically important, our success in these efforts will ultimately depend on dismantlement of transnational-criminal organizations that traffic in illegal drugs and other commodities. SOUTHCOM also measures the effectiveness of our capacity building programs that are intended to develop and integrate Partner Nation capabilities into the JIATF-S operational framework and magnify U.S. efforts.

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

The corrosive effects of drug trafficking such as violence and corruption undermine democratic institutions in many countries, which poses a threat to the region and the United States. The proceeds from the illegal drug trade also fuel criminal and terrorist activities that recognize no country borders. Therefore, I believe it is important for the U.S. to work with Allies and partner

nations to counter the flow of illegal drugs regardless of their intended final destination. That said, we must continue to prioritize those efforts that most directly impact U.S. national security interests, including drug shipments bound for U.S. markets.

The production and trafficking of particular drugs in the SOUTHCOM AOR – such as cocaine and, to a lesser extent, heroin and synthetic opioids – threatens the health and safety of U.S. citizens, Latin Americans, and regional stability.

What is your understanding of the principal illegal drugs produced and trafficked in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

All the cocaine consumed in the U.S., and in the world for that matter, comes from the SOUTHCOM AOR. Additionally a small amount of heroin consumed in the U.S. originates in the region. Some synthetic chemicals also originate in the SOUTHCOM AOR. As SOUTHCOM CDR, I will do everything possible to degrade and destroy this scourge to our nation.

What is your assessment of the threat posed by the trafficking of heroin into the United States from Mexico, Central and South America?

In recent years, we have seen record numbers of deaths due to drug overdoses in America. The overwhelming source of heroin consumed in the U.S. comes from Mexico, with a very small amount originating elsewhere in the region. Some synthetic opioids are beginning to be processed and distributed out of region reviving the more traditional concern of drugs flowing through the Caribbean into the homeland. In addition to the death toll and human suffering in the U.S., the journey that all illicit drugs take to enter the U.S. also leaves in its path corruption, violence, and instability in our partner nations. In addition to the terrible toll of drug abuse on U.S. citizens, trafficking into the U.S. from these regions undermines the stability and security of these governments and threatens regional security.

In your view, what more can be done to combat this effort, particularly in cooperation with U.S. Northern Command?

Information/intelligence sharing is critical to combatting this threat. SOUTHCOM already cooperates very closely with NORTHCOM and both regularly share information related to drug trafficking via well-established operational relationships. Also JIATF-S's joint operating area was purposefully designed to overlap Combatant Command boundaries in order to eliminate operational seams and facilitate continuity of operations across SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM, and Indo-pacific Command (INDOPACOM). JIATF-S is also expanding its cooperation with JIATF-West to address the shipment of opioids and precursor chemicals from INDOPACOM AOR, through portions of SOUTHCOM's AOR normally headed for NORTHCOM's AOR. It is also important that SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM cooperate to assist Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize in securing their shared borders, stopping this illicit flow before it reaches the homeland.

Building Partner Capacity

In the past few years, Congress has provided DOD a number of temporary and permanent authorities to build the capacity of partner nations' security forces and institutions.

In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

I believe that we should assist partner nations in the SOUTHCOM AOR with building capabilities that are both tailored to their unique security needs and will contribute to and enhance regional security. This should include guiding them through Institutional Capacity Building in which the partner nation institutions begin multi-year planning that leads to future self-sustainment. Security cooperation efforts should be viewed as a two-way street with benefit for the United States and the partner nation. Our efforts need to take a long view, well beyond the future year's defense plan, pragmatically recognizing that each partner nation has unique circumstances owing to their historical and cultural context. Security cooperation must respect the host-nation capacity and capability to adapt and change – this will entail cooperating at the speed of relevance defined by the partnership.

In your view, are existing authorities and resourcing sufficient to meet these strategic objectives?

I do believe that existing authorities are sufficient. If confirmed, I will conduct an assessment of security cooperation effectiveness as one of my first priorities and I will not hesitate to come forward to the Secretary of Defense with requests for changes to authorities or additional resources to meet assigned missions.

Are there ways in which existing authorities could be reformed to more effectively and efficiently respond to requirements in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

If confirmed, I will continually review the adequacy of existing authorities and come forward to DoD and Congress with any recommended changes. Additionally, I would specifically look to ensure that the authorities are responsive to emergent requirements.

In your view, what is the appropriate balance between efforts to build partnership capacity at the tactical and operational level and at the institutional and ministerial-level?

I believe to truly build capacity within a nation, there must be efforts to train at all levels from the tactical to the strategic. Tactical capability can only be sustained through long-term planning, budgeting and execution at the ministerial level. The new security cooperation authorities require a balance of training, equipping, and Institutional Capacity Building that encourage this holistic approach.

In your view, how effective can training at the tactical and operational level be if there is significant corruption at the institutional and ministerial level?

Corruption at the institutional and ministerial levels has a detrimental impact to reform efforts, and it has stifled the effectiveness of security cooperation programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, Colombia provides an example of what can be accomplished if partners have the political will to enact change and the United States applies a long view and true whole of government approach to the problem set.

In your view, how should SOUTHCOM approach building partner capacity with host nation militaries that have been tasked to take on the role of police and internal security forces?

As a matter of principle, domestic law enforcement should be the role of civilian law enforcement institutions. While many of our partner nations' militaries in the region have a constitutional role in domestic law enforcement, ideally, the military is in a supporting role to law enforcement institutions. At the same time, we must also recognize that there are times when defense support to civil authorities is necessary and legitimate in cases where the threat exceeds the ability of their public security forces to secure its citizens. In these cases, working closely with the Department of State and Department of Justice, if confirmed, I will emphasize with my counterparts the importance of respect for human rights and ensure that human rights training is incorporated into our security cooperation program.

Do you believe the ability of a partner nation to sustain U.S.-provided equipment and capabilities should be a key factor in determining the level and type of assistance to be provided?

Yes, I do believe that a partner nation's ability to sustain training and equipment should be a factor in determining the level of support provided. There are some principles, which must be applied, such as the ability of the partner to receive the requested and offered support, the pace of change that is possible and partner nation's political acceptance. There may be cases in which it is in our national interest to support a partner for the long term. It's important that we consider our partners pace and recognize that one size does not fit all. If approached correctly, military-to-military relations will be the bedrock of trusted nation-to-nation relations that withstand the test of time and are constant despite the political changes inherent in any democracy.

Transnational Threat Networks

Transnational threat networks – including criminal organizations – 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, moving not only narcotics but also weapons, money, and people throughout the Western Hemisphere and throughout the world. This threat could potentially extend to the use of smuggling routes by terrorist organizations.

What is your assessment of the threat to the United States posed by transnational threat networks, and how have these threats evolved in their character and severity over the past four years?

As transnational threat networks continue to engage in nefarious and illegal activity, the threat continues to evolve in complexity. Drug traffickers, criminal gangs, violent extremist organizations (such as ISIS and Lebanese Hezbollah (LH)) and other threat networks are highly adaptive and adept at exploiting global technology, trade, and financial systems to conduct their illegal operations. These groups are well financed, with access to the latest technology and capabilities, and conduct attacks against innocent civilians, security forces, judges, and institutions, and they use multiple domains, to include air, cyber, sea, and land. In the past few years, traditional gang elements have become more transnational in nature and threat networks are developing infrastructure in major U.S. cities. There is also a rise in new forms of criminal activity, including an expansion into fentanyl smuggling and crypto-currencies.

What kind of additional support, if any, would you envision DOD – and SOUTHCOM in particular – providing to U.S. law enforcement to combat transnational threat networks?

DoD should continue to conduct detection and monitoring of the transit of illegal drugs, support interdiction operations, and build the capacity of partner nation security and law enforcement forces through training, equipping, and infrastructure support. DoD can also assist law enforcement and intelligence community efforts through the development of comprehensive intelligence analysis of threat networks and their enablers. DoD will rarely be the lead agency in this effort. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly within DoD and across the U.S. government combating transnational threats.

What are your views on the role of DOD counter-threat finance activities and what role, if any, should SOUTHCOM have in supporting such activities?

DoD plays an important role in supporting the counter-threat finance efforts of the Department of the Treasury, as well as, other law enforcement agencies, by providing intelligence and analytic support. SOUTHCOM should contribute analytical capabilities to the maximum extent possible.

What should SOUTHCOM do to counter the potential for terrorist organizations to use smuggling routes to gain entry to the United States for illegal purposes?

SOUTHCOM should provide its capabilities—including the fusion of network intelligence, data, and open-source analysis and biometrics equipment—to protect the homeland, deny, and ultimately destroy any terrorist organization that attempts entry into the United States. SOUTHCOM is uniquely positioned, with regional expertise and trusted partnerships, to understand the human terrain and illicit networks that might be used by violent extremist organizations.

Central American Security Strategy

On January 29, 2015, the Obama administration released a strategy entitled Promoting Prosperity, Security and Good Governance in Central America, principally focused on promoting enhanced trade, security, and governance in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras – the so-called Northern Triangle. The Trump administration requested additional resources in its FY2019 budget to implement this strategy.

What is your understanding of the United States' Central America strategy?

As I understand, the U.S. Government Central America Strategy provides a framework to support Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras with growing economic prosperity, building good governance and enhancing security in order to create societal conditions leading to reductions in social unrest, violence and poverty that have in turn would contribute to the decreased migration from these Central American countries. The security aspect of this strategy is primarily focused on support to law enforcement and citizen security. The Department of Defense supports this line of effort by working to professionalize the militaries of the region. I do understand though that the funding allocated to the strategy is primarily focused on the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

How do you envision SOUTHCOM's activities in the region complementing the strategy?

As described above, the Department of Defense primarily complements the strategy's security efforts by focusing on the professionalization of the Northern tier militaries, which includes defense institution building and Human Rights program. SOUTHCOM also helps build the partner nation military, and some law enforcement, capacity and capability; increase interoperability through training and exercises; assist in the extension of governance through its Civil Affairs programs and medical readiness exercises; and conduct information, and where the proper agreements are in place, intelligence sharing. SOUTHCOM's mission to detect and monitor aerial and maritime illicit drug flow and support interdiction also complements the strategy.

What do you believe is the appropriate role, if any, of SOUTHCOM in supporting counter threat finance activities?

The Department of Defense provides intelligence and analytical capabilities to the interagency efforts to counter threat finance. I believe SOUTHCOM already does some work to support the Department of the Treasury and other law enforcement agencies by providing this type of support.

Mexico and Cooperation with NORTHCOM

Much of the illegal narcotics supply comes into Mexico from the SOUTHCOM AOR. While Mexico is in the U.S. Northern Command AOR, the rest of Latin America is in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

What is your vision of how SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM should work together in a fully coordinated effort with respect to Mexico and other security challenges?

Transregional threat networks are not constrained by the boundaries outlined in the Unified Command Plan, requiring the Combatant Commanders to eliminate all mission seams. This requires constant communication at all levels between the commands and, if confirmed, I will ensure this is the absolute standard. This type of communication and seamless relationship is not

unique to SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM. The threats we face today are global in nature and require that we all address them in that manner.

Colombia

Over the past several years, the Colombian government has engaged in an intensive peace and reconciliation process with members of the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and other paramilitary forces in Colombia which was partially enabled by U.S. assistance and security cooperation programs operating through Plan Colombia. Nonetheless, illegal armed groups – including the National Liberation Army (ELN) and numerous drug trafficking organizations – continue to threaten stability while also engaging in the cultivation and export of illegal drugs, including cocaine.

What is your assessment of the current security situation in Colombia?

Colombia's security situation has improved significantly by all measures and their focus is now on consolidating a hard-won peace, they still face challenges from illegal armed groups and drug trafficking organizations. Colombia, like other partners in the region, is also concerned about the instability emanating from Venezuela that has resulted in mass migrations into neighboring countries. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Colombian government and military as they continue counter-narcotics efforts, extending rule of law to rural Colombia, and build their armed forces to meet new and emerging challenges in Colombia and globally.

How should U.S. security cooperation programs and activities evolve as the security situation in Colombia continues to improve?

As the tactical and operational capabilities of the Colombian forces mature, I believe SOUTHCOM's security cooperation programs should evolve to focus more on sustaining military-to-military relations at the tactical level and Institutional Capacity Building that will enable long-term strategic planning and sustainment of the force. The bedrock of all SOUTHCOM efforts should be transparency and alignment across DoD and USG so our collaboration is fully realized over time. Fundamental to all our building partner capacity is appropriate intelligence and information sharing, as well as, education and training that fosters trust and builds long term person to person relationships. The U.S. has an unequalled military education system – this strategic advantage is the envy of our adversaries and our partners covet participation. Finally, I believe our security cooperation programs should enable Colombia to provide for their internal security and contribute more broadly to regional and international security efforts.

What programs should continue in order to ensure that the progress that has been made is sustained?

As mentioned above, information and intelligence sharing programs, training/education and strategic-level-institution-building training programs that build the defense institution, solidify civilian oversight of the uniformed service, and codify the planning for long-term sustainment should be a priority. Also SOUTHCOM should monitor and military sales sustainment training

needed to ensure provided capability is utilized and available for the long-term.

In your view, does SOUTHCOM require any additional authorities to support its efforts in Colombia?

I believe the existing authorities are sufficient to support efforts in Colombia.

What lessons should be drawn from Plan Colombia to inform building partner capacity efforts elsewhere in the SOUTHCOM AOR and beyond?

Plan Colombia started with strong bipartisan support in both chambers of the U.S. Congress and set the stage for a long-term, sustained commitment and the strategic patience required to bring a country back from the brink of failure. Colombia was fully committed to the deployment and execution of the plan providing considerable finances to the effort. Also key to Plan Colombia's success was its whole-of-government approach bringing to bear authorities and capabilities of various U.S. agencies.

How would you approach the issue of respect for human rights in the Colombian military?

SOUTHCOM has a longstanding policy of promoting human rights as part of partner engagement and security cooperation. Colombia has been a primary participant in this program and has embraced human rights at all levels. If confirmed, I will personally engage with all partner nations to further human rights.

Colombia has demonstrated a willingness to become more involved internationally, to include increased engagements with regional partners, signing a Cooperation and Security of Information Agreement with NATO in 2013. Currently, Colombia has forces deployed alongside peacekeepers from twelve nations in Egypt as part of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) which oversees the terms of the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

In what ways should SOUTHCOM assist Colombia in its efforts to assume a greater role internationally?

Colombia is NATO's first and only global partner in Latin America. SOUTHCOM should encourage and enable greater Colombian contributions and expertise to international-security missions and multinational training exercises in South Korea, Afghanistan, and possibly Europe. However, as Colombia looks to expand its international focus, it is critical that its priority remain on consolidating the peace in their own country.

Venezuela

Venezuela continues to suffer a deep political and economic crisis under President Maduro's authoritarian regime, which continues to spread anti-American rhetoric, import large quantities of arms, engage in drug trafficking through key officials, and oppress its population. As a result, Venezuela's dysfunction threatens stability throughout the region and U.S.-Venezuelan relations continue to be strained.

What is your understanding of U.S. policy towards Venezuela and DoD's role in carrying it out?

As I understand it, U.S. policy is to foster the conditions for a peaceful return to democracy and prosperity in Venezuela. I believe that Venezuela's political, economic, and humanitarian crisis, which has had tremendous negative impact across the region, can be best addressed through diplomatic efforts. DoD is providing limited support to neighboring countries, who are impacted by the Venezuelan migration crisis. One example is the pending deployment of the USNS Comfort to the region to help relieve pressure on regional medical systems.

What is your view of President Maduro's intentions in the region?

President Maduro is focused on undermining democracy and consolidating authority in his regime. He is a vocal critic of the United States and attempts to challenge U.S. standing in the region with his rhetoric.

How would you assess Venezuelan relations with China, Cuba, Iran, and Russia vis-à-vis the national interests of the United States?

Although Venezuela's relationship with Iran has diminished in recent years, its continued ties with China, Russia, and Cuba are alarming. Russia and China are enabling the corrupt Maduro regime via loans, financing, and arms sales, which is extending the human suffering in Venezuela. These relationships are even more concerning given the increasing instability and growing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. If confirmed, I will monitor the situation in Venezuela very closely to include its ties to these external state actors.

What is your understanding of the current state of military-to-military relations between the U. S. and Venezuela?

There are no military-to-military relations between the U.S. and Venezuela.

What is your understanding of the extent to which Venezuelan government or military forces are involved in the drug trade?

I am aware that the Department of Treasury has sanctioned many senior Venezuelan government officials for drug-related activities, to include senior military officials, under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act.

What is your assessment of the impact of Venezuela's deteriorating economic situation on the stability of the government and its relationship with the broader region?

Venezuela is facing its worst socioeconomic crisis. Financial shortfalls and dwindling oil revenues coupled with extreme debt and hyperinflation are exacerbating the humanitarian crisis and driving additional migration out of the country. This mass migration into neighboring countries is extending the humanitarian crisis and stressing the region's resources.

Cuba

What is your understanding of U.S. policy towards Cuba and DoD's role in carrying it out?

U.S. policy toward Cuba is articulated in the June 2017 National Security Presidential Memorandum entitled "Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba" (NSPM). The NSPM emphasizes advancing human rights and democracy in Cuba, reaffirms the economic embargo and the statutory ban on tourism to Cuba, and aims to ensure U.S. engagement benefits the Cuban people and strengthens the Cuban private sector. The NSPM also maintains bilateral engagement on issues critical to U.S. national security and the public health and safety of the United States, such as law enforcement cooperation, disaster preparedness, and migration, especially the return of Cuban nationals with final orders of removal. With the exception of the U.S. Coast Guard, which maintains a relationship with its Cuban counterparts on a range of law enforcement and migration issues, the United States and Cuba do not engage in regular military-to-military cooperation. Beyond Coast Guard engagement, DoD's only regular communication with the Cuban military is the "fenceline talks" that occur between the Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Station at Guantanamo Bay and his or her Cuban counterpart to address local operational and security issues.

What are your views on the feasibility of security cooperation with Cuba in the near future?

Security cooperation with Cuba would require a change in U.S. policy. I would defer to the Department of State on the feasibility of such a change.

SOUTHCOM's Military Service Component Commands

Like all of the Combatant Commands, SOUTHCOM has military service component commands that implement the plans and policies of the Combatant Commander. Each of the component commands also have responsibility to the Services they represent. It seems SOUTHCOM, however, exercises limited command and control in directing specific activities and limited oversight of the activities of the component commands.

If confirmed, will you review the command-and-control relationship and share your findings with the committee?

Yes.

SOUTHCOM does not have any assigned forces and – as a result – is required to compete for forces within the global request for forces process.

Given the Department's focus on the greater Middle East and Indo-Pacific regions, do you believe the SOUTHCOM Commander will be able to secure the necessary personnel to accomplish its partnering and engagement mission within its AOR?

If confirmed, I will advocate vigorously using analytical data and passionate, yet reasoned arguments for the resources needed to conduct SOUTHCOM assigned missions. I will ensure judicious use of every resource provided and look for innovative approaches, creative combinations of resources, leveraging enhanced partnerships (USG IA and nations), new/emerging technologies, additional authorities, new operating concepts, experimentation, and non-traditional approaches, such as private partnerships and contract solutions to deliver results on SOUTHCOM missions.

If not, how would you assess the risk to U.S. strategic interests in the region?

As the global superpower, the United States must prioritize around the world and has rightly done so in the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy. Any prioritization will inherently drive resource allocation (time, money, staff, schools etc.) – this does not mean that we are inherently risking future defense relations and by implication less U.S. access and influence for our markets and ideas in areas such as the SOUTHCOM AOR. Intellectual and human capital through coordinated and sustained engagement at the foundational military-to-military level can bolster our ties and form the bedrock for stable U.S. strategic interests with partner nations and regional organizations over the long haul.

Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), which replaced the School of the Americas in 2001, has the mission of contributing to theater cooperation activities through the education and training of students in the Western Hemisphere from Canada to Chile.

What is the relationship between SOUTHCOM and WHINSEC?

WHINSEC is not a SOUTHCOM subordinate unit, as it resides in the Department of the Army's chain of command. However, WHINSEC plays a valuable role in SOUTHCOM's security cooperation mission by providing professional education and training to eligible personnel from throughout the Western Hemisphere. The Commander, U.S. Southern Command is also a congressionally-mandated member of the WHINSEC Board of Visitors.

In your view, does WHINSEC promote the national security interests of the United States in the Western Hemisphere?

Yes, it does. WHINSEC, like other professional military education institutions, not only promotes professionalization of partner nation militaries, but it also fosters life-long ties among the military personnel, who come together from across the globe. Both of these elements are critical to the national security interests of the United States.

In your view, what more – if anything – does WHINSEC need to do to emphasize human rights in its curriculum?

I believe all military personnel and institutions must continuously strive to promote the importance of human rights. To that end, WHINSEC offers a Democracy and Human Rights Program that promotes understanding and respect for democratic values and institutions, human

rights, the rule of law, and civilian control of a nation's armed forces. WHINSEC prides itself on promoting democratic values and respect for human rights.

Will you attend the regularly scheduled WHINSEC Board of Visitors meetings?

Yes.

Influence of Countries Outside the Region in Latin America

There has been increased concern in recent years about China, Russia, and Iran's growing interest in Latin America, particularly their relations with Venezuela, Cuba, and Nicaragua. These countries' engagement in Latin America is of particular concern in light of the priorities established in the NDS.

What is your assessment of China, Russia, and Iran's presence and objectives in the region?

China, Russia, and Iran are courting some of our most strategically important Latin American and Caribbean partners and supporting authoritarian, anti-American regimes.

China is aggressively expanding its economic, political, and diplomatic influence across the region through infrastructure investments, loans, and financing. It seeks to expand its Belt and Road Initiative to Latin America and the Caribbean, and has successfully won diplomatic recognition from key partners (Panama, Dominican Republic, El Salvador) in the past year. As in other theaters, Russia employs the full suite of diplomatic, intelligence, and informational tools in an attempt to influence public attitudes and decision makers in the region. It has made significant inroads in the regional-information domain, flooding the internet, social media, and television outlets with original and reproduced propaganda to sow doubts about U.S. intentions. China and Russia have both provided financial lifelines to the government of Venezuela, and have relationships with other authoritarian regimes (Cuba, Nicaragua). They both offer 'no strings attached' loans and military training and opaque financing deals. Iran's efforts in the region have primarily been undertaken to circumvent international sanctions, which have resulted in Iranian diplomatic and political isolation, although their senior level engagements have waned in recent years.

What is the extent of China, Russia, and Iran's military-to-military engagement with Latin American countries?

Russia and China both directly compete with the U.S. in arms sales and security cooperation. Russia has focused on traditional areas like counter-narcotics training in Central America, while China focuses more on 'soft power' like the PEACE ARK deployment and all-expenses paid training at its military schools in Beijing. Both seek to offset our security partnerships and influence by offering an alternative to US training and engagement. As the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran's involvement in the region remains a matter for concern. Iran has reduced its overt military engagements in recent years, and has not made significant progress in increasing its arms sales to the region.

In your view, what is the appropriate method to counter any malign influence that countries from outside the region may attempt to exert on Latin American and Caribbean nations?

China and Russia have capitalized on regional perceptions of U.S. disengagement. I believe the most appropriate method to counter malign influence is to remain proactively engaged with the region, to reinforce our existing partnerships, and attract new partners and allies into our regional and global security network. We need to improve our efforts to address Russian disinformation in the region and improve our understanding of Chinese strategic goals in the hemisphere.

What is your understanding of Hezbollah's activities in the hemisphere?

As I understand it, Hezbollah maintains an extensive regional network of supporters and sympathizers in the region, some of whom are involved in trade-based money laundering and other illicit activities to generate revenue, a portion of which goes to support the parent organization in the Middle East. Despite this focus on financial gain, Lebanese Hezbollah maintains an operational infrastructure in the region with the capability to conduct or support Iranian or Hezbollah terrorist attacks with little to no warning.

Special Operations Personnel in Embassies

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.

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

Yes.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

What should be the role for the U.S. military in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

One of SOUTHCOM's primary missions, as outlined in the Unified Command Plan, is to plan for and conduct military support to humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. The Command's role is largely to support the lead federal agency in disaster response and, where appropriate, facilitate the integration of non-governmental organizations, academia, and the business community as part of a whole of society response. The SOUTHCOM area of responsibility experiences an average of approximately 50 natural disasters annually that range from earthquakes, to hurricanes, to volcanoes.

Are the resources necessary to fulfill this role currently available to the SOUTHCOM Commander? If not, what additional resources are necessary?

There are processes in place for requesting resources to include forces for these missions. If confirmed, I will review SOUTHCOM's capabilities in this arena and will work tirelessly with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in his global integrator role and the Secretary of Defense to ensure requirements are sourced when needed.

Law of the Sea Convention

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is pending consideration in the United States Senate.

What is your view on whether or not the United States should join the Law of the Sea Convention?

As a senior joint officer with significant maritime experience, I fully support U.S. accession to the Convention.

How would being a party to the Law of the Sea Convention help or hinder the United States' security posture?

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) codifies and ensures important navigation and overflight rights that are essential for the mobility and global access of U.S. armed forces. UNCLOS supports our National Security Strategy/National Defense Strategy and helps advance our economic and security objectives. From my professional experience, I know that the United States, as a major maritime power, respects and exercises these important navigation and transit rights set forth in UNCLOS as customary international law. However, treaty law remains the firmest legal foundation upon which to base our global presence across the maritime domain. US accession to UNCLOS will lock in these navigational rights as a matter of treaty law and will better position us to both avoid erosion of these important rights and hold others accountable.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes.

Do you agree to answer letters and requests for information from individual Senators who are members of this Committee?

Yes.

If confirmed again, do you agree to provide to this Committee relevant information within the jurisdictional oversight of the Committee when requested by the Committee, even in the absence of the formality of a letter from the Chairman?

Yes.