

**Advance Policy Questions for Lieutenant General Austin Miller, U.S. Army  
Nominee for Commander, Resolute Support Mission and Commander,  
United States Forces-Afghanistan**

**Duties and Qualifications**

**What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Resolute Support Mission (RSM)?**

The Commander, Resolute Support is the senior NATO uniformed officer in Afghanistan. He is the in-theater operational commander, exercising operational control of all Resolute Support forces in Afghanistan. The Commander employs assigned forces to conduct security force assistance activities (train, advise, assist) to develop credible, capable, and increasingly sustainable Afghan security institutions that are capable of preventing terrorist safe havens in Afghanistan.

**What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan (USFOR-A) and how those duties and functions relate to those of the Commander, NATO RSM?**

The Commander of USFOR-A is the senior U.S. uniformed officer in Afghanistan with duties distinct from his duties as Commander, Resolute Support. The Commander of USFOR-A is a Joint Task Force Commander within U.S. CENTCOM. He exercises National Command Element and National Support Element authorities and responsibilities to ensure that U.S. forces have the guidance, equipment, and funding they need to conduct their mission. He exercises tactical control of U.S. counter terrorism forces in Afghanistan.

**Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Commander, NATO RSM, and/or Commander, USFOR-A?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will expand my knowledge of the current strategic environment in Afghanistan by seeking input from a wide range of U.S. and foreign military and civilian experts. I also know that there is a very qualified staff in place who will be able to advise and prepare me to perform my duties.

**Relationships**

**Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, NATO RSM and Commander, USFOR-A to the following:**

**The Secretary of Defense.** The USFOR-A Commander reports to the Commander, United States Central Command (CENTCOM), who reports directly to the Secretary of Defense. This

reporting relationship is prescribed in 10 USC Section 164(d)(1). The Resolute Support Mission Commander does not have a direct reporting relationship with the Secretary of Defense. Rather, he reports through the Commander, U.S. CENTCOM. COMRS reports to the NATO chain of command through the Commander of Joint Forces Command – Brunssum, who reports to the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

**The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.** The USFOR-A Commander does not have a formal command relationship with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but coordinates with him through the Commander of U.S. Central Command. The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council. While he is the nation's senior military officer, he is not in the chain of command.

**Commander, U.S. Central Command.** The Commander, USCENTCOM exercises authoritative direction and control over all U.S. forces in the CENTCOM area of responsibility, which includes all U.S. forces in Afghanistan. The Commander, USCENTCOM provides authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics. He has delegated National Command Element and National Support Element authority and responsibilities to the Commander, USFOR-A.

**NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe.** NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR), is the NATO strategic-level commander of all NATO forces, including those assigned to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. SACEUR provides the Commander of Joint Forces Command-Brunssum (JFC-B) with strategic guidance and direction. Joint Forces Command-Brunssum is NATO's operational level command and provides guidance for the mission in Afghanistan.

**Commander, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan.** The Commander, CSTC-A serves two primary roles. The first is as the commanding general of the DoD element that provides equipment, supplies, services, training, facility and infrastructure repair, renovation, construction, funds, advising, and other security assistance to the Afghan Ministries of Defense (MoD) and Interior (MoI). Second, the Commander, CSTC-A is the NATO Resolute Support Mission Deputy Chief of Staff for Security Assistance (DCOS SA). The DCOS SA develops the capacity of the MoD, MoI, and their forces to conduct the following functions: resource management; inspector general duties; rule of law; and logistics and sustainment. CSTC-A oversees international contributions to, and expenditures from, the NATO ANA Trust Fund.

**U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.** The USFOR-A Commander provides operational assistance and advice, to include U.S. military views and recommendations, to the U.S. Ambassador. The Commander maintains a close working relationship with the Ambassador to ensure that military and civilian efforts are synchronized and mutually supporting.

**U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.** This position was eliminated by the U.S. Department of State. However, the Commander, USFOR-A maintains a close working

relationship through the U.S. Ambassador to Kabul with the Bureau of South and Central Asia Affairs.

**The Secretary General of NATO.** The Secretary General provides guidance and direction to SACEUR through the Military Committee following consultations and decisions by the North Atlantic Council. The SACEUR communicates those directives and guidance through NATO's military chain of command. The Commander and the Secretary General confer regularly, including through formal updates to the Secretary General and the North Atlantic Council on the progress of military operations in Afghanistan.

**NATO Senior Civilian Representative for Afghanistan.** The NATO Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) for Afghanistan is the NATO civilian counterpart to COMRS. As the NATO Secretary General's senior representative in Afghanistan, the SCR is charged with prosecuting the political aspects of NATO's mission in Afghanistan. Although there is no formal command relationship, the SCR and COMRS work closely in accordance with North Atlantic Council-approved Terms of Reference for the SCR and SACEUR, in addition to Joint Force Command-Brunnsom's military guidance for COMRS.

**United Nations Special Representative in Afghanistan.** No command relationship exists between COMRS and the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). However, the RS mission was welcomed by UN Security Council Resolution 2189 to train, advise, and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions and the SRCG provides important support to the RSM overall objectives. The SACEUR OPLAN states that COMRS is expected to work in close coordination with both the NATO SCR and the UN SRSG. These partnerships support efforts to work with the Afghan government to ensure progress towards the goal of a self-sufficient Afghanistan.

### **Major Challenges and Priorities**

**What are the major challenges you foresee in the execution of the mission in Afghanistan?**

We cannot compel reconciliation in Afghanistan while Pakistan, Russia, and Iran continue to enable the Taliban insurgency. NATO, U.S., and Afghan efforts continue to ensure the Taliban cannot win militarily. However, military pressure alone is not sufficient to achieve a political solution to the Afghan conflict. Diplomatic and social pressure are also necessary. In addition, ISIS-K remains a barrier to Afghan stability despite heavy losses of terrain and fighters. They maintain resilient recruiting efforts, largely by recruiting fighters from violent extremist organizations, and continue to undermine the Afghan Government's credibility by attacking innocent civilians. Finally, Afghan reforms have not yet eradicated systemic corruption that limits the combat effectiveness of fighting units and undermines governmental legitimacy.

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

Militarily, we must continue to improve the capability and capacity of Afghan Security Forces to achieve an overmatch that (1) convinces the Taliban that they cannot win militarily; and (2) enables the Government to secure a critical mass of the population. We increase the offensive capability of Afghan security forces by continuing to grow their Air Force and Special Forces, while maintaining an increased advisory role that enables the Afghan Army to gain and hold terrain. We will improve the “hold” capability through fielding of the Afghan National Army Territorial Force; and improved training and leadership. The U.S. will continue to employ airstrikes, Special Operations Forces, and partnered operations to destroy the leadership, finance, and logistics that allow terrorist and insurgent networks to function. We cannot address foreign enablement of the Taliban using military means alone. It requires close partnership with the US State Department and the NATO alliance to gain the necessary international support to challenge the behavior of Pakistan, Russia, and Iran. Finally, we must hold our Afghan partners accountable for implementing programs that identify and prosecute corrupt officials, retire ineffective leaders, promote capable military leadership, and ensure good stewardship of international resources.

**Relations with Congress**

**What are your views on the state of the relationship of the Commander, NATO RSM and Commander, USFOR-A with the Senate Armed Services Committee in particular, and with Congress in general?**

I am aware that the Secretary of Defense has directed that the Committee be supported to the fullest extent possible by the entire Department of Defense in order that it can execute its oversight functions properly. If confirmed, my relationship with the Committee will be transparent, responsive, and cordial, although I will report through my chain of command.

**If confirmed, what actions would you take to sustain a productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Congress and the Commander, NATO RSM and Commander, USFOR-A?**

If confirmed, I will always provide Congress with a candid military perspective on U.S. policy objectives and my strategy to achieve them.

**Torture and Enhanced Interrogation Techniques**

**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. Department of Defense personnel are required to treat all detainees humanely at all times. Pursuant to the provisions of the Bilateral Security Agreement we have with Afghanistan, the U.S. does not conduct detainee operations. However, we are training, advising, and assisting our Afghan partners in the MOI and MOD regarding all aspects of detention, from battlefield capture through prosecution, in order to ensure international standards for the humane treatment of detainees are followed at all times. We also continue to train our DoD forces on detainee treatment standards to ensure they remain aware of, and are able to apply these standards at all times.

**Security Situation in Afghanistan**

**What is your assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan and the nature, size, and scope of the insurgency and the terrorist threat?**

In the fall of 2017 after President Trump's announcement of the South Asia Strategy, the Taliban deliberately shifted its approach from conventional terrain-focused operations to guerilla tactics and terrorist attacks. These tactics include raids against outlying districts and remote checkpoints, intended to gain media attention, inflict casualties on the ANDSF, and avoid decisive engagements. These tactics also cause high civilian casualties. Currently, 65% of the Afghan population live in areas controlled or influenced by the Government of Afghanistan, while only 12% live in areas controlled or influenced by insurgents. The remainder are in contested areas. 87% of Afghan people believe a return to Taliban rule would be bad for the country. After 40 years of war, the Afghan people strongly desire peace, as evidenced by the calls of the Afghanistan Ulema and the grass roots peace movement.

**Strategic Objectives**

**What is your understanding of U.S. vital interests and strategic objectives in Afghanistan?**

The United States must ensure that Afghanistan, never-again, becomes a staging-ground for international terrorist attacks against the homeland. The attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 emanated from this region, and 21 of the world's 99 designated terrorist organizations remain there. The U.S. relationship with the Afghan Government ensures that host-nation leaders support U.S. security interests, and that the U.S. has an enduring capability to conduct counterterrorism operations. Finally, we must safeguard U.S. and NATO legitimacy against efforts to undermine Afghan progress from states such as Russia, Iran, and Pakistan.

**What is your understanding of U.S. strategy to achieve these objectives?**

The U.S. South Asia Strategy provides a conditions-based approach for regional and national change using the “R4+S” framework. “R4+S,” stands for regionalize, realign, reinforce, reconcile, and sustain. The first R, regionalize, recognizes that challenges exist beyond Afghanistan. The approach takes a holistic view of the region to address problems within Afghanistan. The second R is for Realign, and signifies that we are shifting our advisory effort to the point of greatest military need. The third R is Reinforce. This represents the additional troops and enablers authorized by the President last summer. The last R is Reconciliation, which is the desired outcome of our military operations. This strategy will be carried out by, with, and through our Afghan partners in a manner that is politically, fiscally, and militarily sustainable. Further, the U.S. military is part of a 39 nation NATO-led coalition dedicated to developing Afghan security forces and institutions. As Afghan defense capability increases, so too does our ability to employ resources in support of counter-terrorism efforts, and to protect the homeland.

**Afghanistan and the South Asia Strategy**

**In August 2017, President Trump announced a new strategy for South Asia. The mission of the U.S. military continues to focus on training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces as part of the NATO-led coalition and conducting counterterrorism operations against al-Qa’ida and ISIS-K. In support of the strategy the President authorized an increase of roughly 4,000 additional advisors and enablers.**

**What is your understanding of the main military lines of effort to support the South Asia strategy?**

U.S. forces in Afghanistan participate in two different – but complementary missions. Resolute Support is the NATO-led mission to train, advise, and assist effective, sustainable, and affordable Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. USFOR-A employs U.S. advisors to build offensive capability and professionalism in the Afghan Army, Special Forces, and Air Force. Operation Freedom’s Sentinel is the U.S. counter-terrorism mission in Afghanistan. Freedom’s Sentinel employs U.S. enablers and capabilities to destroy the terrorist networks that threaten the homeland. As the advisory mission increases Afghan capability, the U.S. focuses resources on counter-terrorism. USFOR-A enables the USG whole of government approach and looks to achieve unity of effort with other USG agencies.

**What military activities or lines of effort do you anticipate will be increased or accelerated with the additional troops and resources?**

Under the South Asia Strategy “R” (reinforce), CENTCOM provided additional troops and capabilities to Afghanistan as the main effort. My understanding is that the additional troops and resources will improve Afghan National Defense and Security Forces capabilities, increase Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) missions, and expand “enabler” support to ANDSF efforts

across Afghanistan. U.S. and Coalition advisors provide expertise and experience to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces from the ministerial through battalion level. Operation Freedom's Sentinel's complementary efforts employ enablers and airpower to deny enemy financing, logistics, training, and safe-haven.

**What, if any, challenges do you foresee in the implementation of the plan announced by the President?**

The South Asia Strategy is working as evidenced by the progress toward its objective of reconciliation. The peace offer by President Ghani, and the open Taliban "Letter to the American People," provide the essential issues to be resolved. The cease fire announced by both sides over Eid al Fitr is unprecedented in this 17 year war. This would not have been possible without the South Asia Policy. However, military pressure alone cannot bring about a peaceful conclusion to the conflict in Afghanistan. Social and diplomatic pressure are also necessary. This requires close cooperation between military and diplomatic efforts to reduce external enablement of the Taliban, build regional consensus in support of reconciliation efforts, and maintain pressure on the Taliban as the Afghan Government pursues peace talks. I believe the key challenge is convincing Afghanistan's neighbors that a secure and stable Afghanistan is in their own interest, and that they should play a positive role creating conditions for a political realignment. This requires a coordinated political military effort

**If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing those challenges?**

If confirmed, I will assess the array of challenges with my subordinates, U.S. and NATO leadership, and outside experts. My assessment will include close consultation with my Afghan counterparts, and an evaluation of where we can reinforce success in support of the South Asia strategy.

**Progress of Afghanistan**

**What is your assessment of Afghanistan's progress toward stability and security over the past 17 years?**

If confirmed I will make a full assessment of the situation but I believe the NATO train, advise, and assist approach, and the South Asia Strategy, can create conditions for reconciliation. In 2014, the Afghans began leading the fight against the Taliban. In contrast to previous years, the Afghans now have over 330,000 members of the armed forces that are fully responsible for security throughout Afghanistan. They have been able to execute simultaneous Corps level offensive operations, characterized by integrated conventional, air, and Special Forces operations. President Ghani's Afghan Security Roadmap is improving the offensive capability of the Afghan National Army so they can expand population security by 2020.



**What do you assess to be the main risk factors to progress on security and stability going forward?**

External enablement of the insurgency remains the greatest challenge to security and stability going forward. Corruption continues to undermine Afghan Government credibility and effectiveness, and impedes the political cooperation needed to unify Afghan efforts against the insurgency.

**Taliban Reconciliation and the Negotiations Process**

**Numerous Administration officials, to include the Secretary of Defense and the former Secretary of State, have stated that the desired end state in Afghanistan is a negotiated settlement between the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan to bring the conflict to a peaceful end.**

**What is your assessment of the status of negotiations between the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan?**

In general, it seems that the Afghan Government is taking courageous steps while maintaining military pressure on the Taliban. President Ghani's February 2017 peace appeal was historic, as was his June unilateral cease-fire announcement. Progress will be incremental, but it is notable that the Taliban issued their own unilateral cease-fire shortly after President Ghani's announcement. This is an unprecedented moment in this long war, and will hopefully serve as a catalyst for the peace process.

**What is your understanding of the primary diplomatic lines of effort?**

The Department of State leads U.S. diplomatic efforts in Afghanistan. My understanding is that the Department of State and U.S. Embassy-Kabul are engaging the many constituencies in Afghanistan to promote a unified approach to the Taliban. In addition, I am told that U.S. and allied diplomatic efforts include active communication with regional partners to encourage their support for peace negotiations, and reduce Taliban enablement.

**Please describe your understanding of the integration of the military lines of effort and the diplomatic lines of effort?**

My understanding is that military pressure is intended to compel Taliban leadership to accept they cannot win on the battlefield and force them to seek a political solution. Additionally, military pressure from the US and our Afghan partners will be used to destroy those terrorist organizations that seek to use Afghanistan to threaten the US and our Allies. Our military efforts will only work if accompanied by a concerted diplomatic effort to reduce Taliban enablement, and build regional consensus regarding the benefits of a stable Afghanistan.



**How can the military lines of effort in Afghanistan be best aligned to translate battlefield successes into the political end state identified?**

If confirmed, I will assess if changes are needed to better align military lines of effort with assigned political objectives. In general, U.S. Forces apply direct military pressure on insurgent networks and terrorist organizations, primarily through the application of air power and Special Forces operations. Military pressure alone will not achieve our political end state without accompanying diplomatic and social pressure. The Commander of the Resolute Support Mission and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, plays a key role in ensuring the alignment of military lines of effort with political objectives.

**In your assessment are there additional interagency efforts or resources that should be applied in Afghanistan or the broader region to facilitate progress toward a settlement?**

If confirmed, I will assess whether additional interagency resources are required in Afghanistan or across the region. It is clear that this must be a whole-of-government, and coalition, effort. I understand that the military campaign is well-resourced, and has the necessary authorities to ensure that military pressure can be applied where it will be most effective. However, military pressure alone will not be sufficient to compel reconciliation and must be integrated with diplomatic pressure toward regional actors in order to end external enablement of insurgents. Additional resources will likely be necessary when we begin reintegrating Taliban into Afghan society.

**Performance of the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces**

**In mid-2013, the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) assumed lead responsibility for security throughout Afghanistan. In 2015, the ANDSF assumed sole responsibility for securing their country. Currently there are roughly 14,000-15,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan training, advising, and assisting the ANDSF and executing counterterrorism operations.**

**What is your assessment of the performance and capabilities of the ANDSF since assuming full responsibility for Afghanistan's security?**

If confirmed I will assess the performance and capabilities of the ANDSF. As I understand it following initial reversals at the start of the Resolute Support Mission the Afghans have made progress in their ability to secure their populace. In 2015 the Afghans were not prepared to shoulder the burden without support. However, in 2016 the Afghan security forces were 'tested, but prevailed' as the Taliban tried, and failed, in eight attempts to seize provincial capitals. In 2016 President Ghani also laid out his Roadmap for governmental and security reforms, and gained continued support of the NATO TAA mission. In 2017 the Afghans began implementing the four year Afghan Security Roadmap to increase the fighting capabilities of the Afghan security forces, including doubling the Special Forces and growing the Air Force capabilities.

This, and increased use of US airpower, contributed to the Taliban shift away from attempts to seize provincial centers and switch to terrorism, guerilla warfare, and raids on outlying districts. Though the Afghans remain challenged in their ability to expand population security into the rugged hinterlands their offensive capability will increase in 2019 and 2020.

**What do you consider to be the most significant challenges the ANDSF faces in assuming and maintaining its security responsibilities in the 2018 fighting season and in the next few years?**

External support to the insurgency represents the Afghan security forces' most significant challenge. Reducing the flow of men, weapons, and equipment from external sources and the removal of external sanctuary is key to creating sustainable security. This will reduce the capacity of the Taliban and others to conduct high profile attacks and raids. The focus of military operations in 2018 is supporting secure and credible elections. Security operations focus on expanding ANDSF control over additional polling places so that more Afghans can vote and more elections observers can watch the voting and ballot counting in safety. This will help enhance the credibility of the elections and contribute to perceptions of legitimacy of the outcome. Simultaneous with this the ANDSF are going through significant leadership transitions as the Inherent Law retires close to 4000 Generals and Colonels from the MOD and MOI. Younger officers will be selected from a merit based system and put in place, but these officers require training and advising for their new roles. In 2019 and beyond, the improved leadership and increased offensive capability should result in improved battlefield performance to compel reconciliation.

**What U.S. and coalition enabling capabilities do you believe are most important to support ANDSF in providing security for Afghanistan?**

I understand that intelligence, fires, and growth of rotary-wing lift for MEDEVAC and assault support are the most important enabling capabilities. In addition, the NATO coalition provides other train, advise, and assist (TAA) capabilities to the ANDSF, to include protection, sustainment, and mission command. These enable the ANDSF to secure Afghanistan against internal threats and set the conditions to secure the country against external threats. As the U.S. employs ISR, air, fires, and protection capabilities for U.S. and NATO TAA missions, the ANDSF benefit from enabled operations.

### **Building and Sustaining the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces**

**Recent reporting from the lead Inspector General for Overseas Contingency Operations indicates that the ANDSF is manned at roughly 38,272 or 11% below their authorized strength of 352,000. Critical specialties such as special operations, aviation maintenance, and pilots are also in increasingly short supply. Additionally, each successive fighting season for the past few years has seen an increase in casualties, with limited data to suggest that trend will subside in the near term.**

**In your view, does the ANDSF have the right size, force mix, and capabilities to address the current security situation on the ground in Afghanistan?**

If confirmed I will assess the ANDSF and security situation. As I understand it the Afghan Security Forces are progressing toward an optimal mix of offensive capability, and sustainable hold forces. The Afghan Security Roadmap will double special operations forces, and increase the size and capability of the Afghan Air Force improving the offensive capability of the ANA to retake control of the population in the “clear” phase. The development of the Afghan National Army Territorial Force – though in its early stages - will ultimately provide a locally recruited, nationally trained and nationally led “hold force” to free the regular army units for offensive operations. Afghan reform initiatives are delivering more capable leaders who will use Afghan combat power to its fullest potential. The Afghan security forces will evolve over time as we assist the Afghans to achieve an effective, sustainable, and affordable force that meets the security challenges they face.

**What in your view are the greatest challenges to building and sustaining the capabilities of the ANDSF over the next two years?**

First, we must continue to increase the offensive capability and professionalism of the ANDSF while ensuring that the Afghan Government can afford and sustain long-term security solutions. Increased offensive capacity, in the form of Afghan Air Force and Special Forces growth, is the key to achieving a lasting overmatch against the Taliban. However, growth of air and SOF capability demands a corresponding reduction in spending on conventional forces. To meet this challenge, we are assisting in the implementation of an Afghan initiative called the Afghan National Army Territorial Force (ANA-TF). The ANA-TF is a locally-recruited and nationally led hold force that the Afghans can sustain and afford. Second, we are implementing Inherent Law and advising at the point of need to improve leadership. Third, corruption and nepotism continue to slow the pace of progress. We must hold our Afghan partners accountable for instituting reforms that remove ineffective leaders and promote good stewardship of international resources. Fourth, we are enabling a US whole of government effort to assist GIRoA to increase revenue.

**If confirmed, what would be your priorities for building the capabilities of the ANDSF, including the key enablers that the ANDSF needs to develop and maintain?**

If confirmed I believe we must reinforce success by continued investment in the development of the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) and the Afghan Air Force (AAF). These are the two most lethal forces on the Afghan battlefield. We must also continue to invest in the ANDSF leadership at all echelons and specifically within the NCO Corps. Lastly we must continue to train the ANDSF maintenance and sustainment capabilities in order to reduce long term costs.

**In your view, does Afghanistan have the ability to generate the human capital necessary to continue to grow a cadre of technically and intellectually skilled service personnel?**

Demographics are in our favor with increasing levels of education and life expectancy. The next generation of Afghans are talented and motivated. There are challenges in recruiting Afghans with the requisite background to immediately perform technically challenging jobs within the ANDSF. Therefore, we must train talented recruits to assume these roles. The U.S. and the International Community must continue to offer technical training to talented and vetted individuals until the Afghan Government can establish a security environment that allows them to fully harness the talent resident in the Afghan population.

**How can the Resolute Support mission assist the government of Afghanistan to ensure that the ANDSF is able to recruit and sustain its capabilities with the right personnel in the right positions?**

Supporting President Ghani's Inherent Law initiative which provides upward mobility to talented and motivated Afghans. Inherent law coupled with support to merit based selection, improved ANDSF schooling, increased opportunity to attend international schools, and English language training all incentivize recruitment and reenlistment. RSM can further assist by manning advisor positions in ANDSF schools and within the ANA Training and Doctrine Command.

**If confirmed, do you agree to conduct a review of the plans for current and future ANDSF recruiting and force generation?**

Yes. If confirmed, I will conduct a review of existing plans as part of the normal process of assuming command.

### **Train, Advise, and Assist (TAA) Mission**

**Since Operation RESOLUTE SUPPORT began in January 2015 its stated mission has been to "provide further training, advice and assistance to the Afghan security forces and institutions." Key tasks include supporting planning and budgeting, assuring accountability and oversight, and assisting rule of law adherence, among others.**

**What is your understanding of the role that U.S. and coalition trainers and advisers will play in building the capabilities of the ANDSF in 2018 and in future years?**

I understand the U.S. and coalition trainers and advisers are training, advising, and assisting (TAA) the ANDSF at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. However, as the ANDSF continue to develop their tactical warfighting capability and capacity, U.S. and coalition advisers will move away from the tactical fight and focus their efforts on advising the ANDSF senior leaders and staffs as they plan campaigns to bring security to the citizens of Afghanistan. In accordance with the NATO and U.S. campaign plan, U.S. and coalition advisers will eventually

reduce their presence at the tactical and operational levels, but remain at the national/strategic levels.

**What is your understanding of the timelines that will be required to develop critical ANDSF capabilities including intelligence, logistics, aviation, and command and control?**

I understand that the Resolute Support Mission takes a conditions-based approach toward security force development. That said, the growth of Afghan Air Force and Special Forces are key to increasing Afghan offensive capability. We will double the number of the Afghan Special Security Forces by 2020, and significantly increase the capability of the Afghan Air Force. Intelligence development is an ongoing process. Sustainment and logistic functions will take longer. Afghan Security Institutions are still developing systems, programs, and policies that reinforce ANDSF capability growth. Progress has been incremental. Our advisory efforts remain focused on leadership and training to ensure Afghan forces develop the capacity to take full advantage of their increased capabilities.

**Given the Taliban's focus on efforts to execute dramatic attacks in Kabul and their desire to seize provincial and district centers, are current U.S. TAA efforts aligned with the most serious threats from insurgent forces?**

If confirmed I will make a complete assessment of our TAA efforts to ensure they are aligned with the most serious threats. As I understand it today our ministry-level train, advise, and assist effort enables the Afghan General Staff to plan multi-corps offensive operations to prevent the Taliban from achieving their 2018 campaign objectives and Taliban have failed to take any provincial centers since 2015. Raids in district and provincial centers this year have failed 80% of the time. Where the TB have succeeded in taking a district center, they were retaken within hours or days. The deployment of additional U.S. advisors to Afghanistan, along with a focus on advising at lower echelons, allows us to focus advising at the point of need. While our CT efforts against the Kabul HPA networks have reduced TB and HQN attacks, ISIS-K threat have increased in the form of PBIEDs. I understand we have significantly increased our advisory footprint in Kabul to include SFAB advisors with Kabul Security Forces to help address this threat.

**The deployment of additional U.S. advisors to Afghanistan along with a focus on advising at lower echelons and possibly accompanying Afghan forces on more operations outside the wire have raised the possibility of increased risk to forces and casualties to U.S. personnel.**

**What is your assessment of the risks involved with the TAA effort and what steps can and should be taken to mitigate those risks?**

The TAA effort includes inherent force protection risk even as it enables the fastest improvements. Green on blue attacks represent an increased risk to the force as we advise at lower echelons. Guardian Angels and counter intelligence (CI) screening mitigates this threat.

## UNCLASSIFIED

All expeditionary advising missions require air/ground fires support, MEDEVAC coverage (Golden Hour), ISR, and appropriate C2 to further mitigate risk to force.

### **What is your assessment of the measures that have been taken by RSM and Afghan leaders to address threats posed by so-called “green-on-blue” insider attacks?**

Resolute Support and Afghan leaders understand that successful insider-attacks erode trust between security forces and their advisors. Resolute Support leadership implemented the Guardian Angel program as part of a broad preventative force protection strategy. In-theater Guardian Angel training is a Joint Reception, Staging, Onward movement & Integration (JRSOI) requirement for all Soldiers. The training builds upon basic soldier skills with a focus on the local operating environment. PoA Ghani has personally directed and emphasized the ANDSF must protect Coalition and U.S. advisors. Afghan leaders continue to ensure that security forces participate in counter-intelligence screening prior to interaction with U.S. advisors.

### **If confirmed, what additional steps, if any, would you recommend to address such attacks?**

Current force protection measures are proving effective. However, we cannot become complacent or cut corners. All advised forces must participate in a thorough vetting process. The intelligence we gain by vetting all ANDSF forces is a critical part of the insider attack mitigation program. RS and USFOR-A regularly review and update the Insider Attack and Guardian Angel policy to account for changing enemy TTPs.

**President Ghani has frequently highlighted the issue of civilian harm prevention as key priority and has established the National Policy for Civilian Casualty Mitigation and Prevention. Additionally, U.S. and coalition advisors continue to work closely with the Afghan Government to reduce civilian casualties, including via TAA efforts at the tactical level.**

### **What is your understanding of current Afghan capabilities to track civilian harm, investigate allegations related to ANDSF operations, and provide assistance to victims of harm?**

The UN in its 2017 annual report on Afghanistan and Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict indicates that CIVCAS caused by Pro-government Forces (ANDSF) in ground engagements are down 37% from 2016. ANDSF capabilities to prevent and track civilian casualties (CIVCAS) and assist victims are steadily improving. Like the U.S., the ANDSF adheres to the Law of Armed Conflict and constantly endeavors to prevent CIVCAS during operations. ANDSF capabilities for tracking, investigating, and compensating CIVCAS related to ANDSF operations have greatly improved due to consistent RS and USFOR-A train, advise, and assist (TAA) efforts. In October 2017, the Afghan government developed and promulgated a National CIVCAS Mitigation Policy which requires a Ministerial-level investigative body that reports directly to the President of Afghanistan, to assess each CIVCAS allegation attributed to the



ANDSF to determine credibility, cause, and victim identity, with the ultimate goal of both compensating victims and preventing future civilian harm.

**What is your understanding of the role of the Resolute Support Civilian Casualties Mitigation Team (CCMT)? In your understanding, is the CCMT appropriately sized and resourced for their tasks?**

The CCMT provides senior U.S. and RS leadership with strategic assessments and recommendations to prevent and mitigate CIVCAS. The CCMT uses a very deliberate board review process to assess all CIVCAS allegations. A board, chaired by a senior military officer, that includes several operational and legal subject matter expert members, reviews all reasonably available information for each CIVCAS allegation. From my understanding, the CCMT is both appropriately sized and resourced for their task.

### **Combatting and Preventing Gross Violations of Human Rights**

**What steps have RSM, USFOR-A, and the Government of Afghanistan taken to ensure that gross violations of human rights, including extra-judicial killings, torture, and sexual abuse, are prevented and reported, and that perpetrators are held accountable?**

To prevent gross violations of human rights (GVHR), RSM, USFOR-A, and the Afghan government have increased training within the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior Affairs and within subordinate Army and police commands, improved investigation procedures by criminal investigators and prosecutors, and emphasized timely adjudication in Afghan courts once offenses are identified. The MOD and MOI have both implemented a Protection of Children in Armed Conflict policy to protect children. USFOR-A and RS efforts to professionalize, train, advise, and assist the ANDSF include GVHR training and reporting and Afghan forces are increasingly reporting GVHR incidents to both their own chains of command and to Coalition forces. Finally, RSM has instituted a new GVHR tracking system which is included in NATO and US training for deploying service members.

### **Counterterrorism Mission**

**What is your understanding of the roles and missions for U.S. military and coalition personnel engaged in counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan?**

The U.S. and coalition Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Afghanistan advise the Afghan Special Security Forces in order to build their counterterrorism capability under NATO's Resolute Support Mission. In addition, U.S. forces execute counterterrorism operations as part of Operation Freedom's Sentinel, targeting Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) who threaten our homeland from abroad. Their charter is to disrupt, destroy, and deny enemy networks the ability to plan and execute attacks on U.S. soil.



**What is your assessment of the size, available capabilities, and authorities for U.S. military personnel engaged in counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan? Do you see a need for adjustments to any of those elements at this time?**

If confirmed, I will assess overall resource requirements for this mission. My general understanding is that U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) engaged in counterterrorism (CT) operations are the right size, and have sufficient capabilities and authorities for assigned CT missions.

### **Afghan Special Operations Forces**

**According to the ANDSF Road Map launched by President Ghani in early 2017, a key line of effort is increasing the size and strength of the ANDSF's most effective fighting units, specifically the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF).**

**What is your understanding of the progress in training and employing the ASSF?**

The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) have demonstrated their ability to train and employ forces and are a battle-tested force. In 2016, following the drawdown of U.S. and Coalition forces, the ASSF successfully defended against eight attacks on provincial capitals throughout the fighting season. The ASSF go beyond shaping operations and conduct 70% of ANA offensive operation and are often the offensive “force of choice” by ANA Corps commanders and senior Ministry of Defense officials.

**What are the most critical enabling capabilities needed by the ASSF to ensure successful mission execution in 2018 and beyond?**

The Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) routinely demonstrate combat proficiency and possess the ability to generate and employ forces. However, enabling capabilities—intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and fires—along with rotary wing lift (MEDEVAC and assault support) remain key ASSF shortfalls. These capabilities are currently in development. The ASSF are establishing both intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, as well as air-to-ground fires capabilities from fixed-wing platforms. Additionally, they are scheduled to receive rotary wing fixed forward-firing capabilities in 2021.

**Concerns have been raised regarding the continued overuse and misuse of the ASSF by conventional Afghan commanders.**

**What is your understanding of how these forces are currently employed?**

As I understand the Afghan Special Security Forces (ASSF) are often the offensive “force of choice” by ANA Corps commanders and senior Ministry of Defense officials. While successful

this can result in the ASSF frequently being applied towards missions more traditionally tasked to conventional forces such as hold forces to secure gains made during offensive operations.

**In your assessment, are there additional actions that should be undertaken to mitigate the risk that the ASSF will be misused in the future?**

If confirmed, I will make a detailed assessment of ASSF capabilities and potential for misuse. I am told that there are a number of measures currently intended to mitigate the risk of ASSF misuse. The Joint Special Operations Coordination Cell (JSOCC) prioritizes and coordinates effective and efficient application of special operations forces. It facilitates continued train/advise/assist efforts at the ANA Corps level, where ASSF requests are generated. This effort, reinforced at the ministerial level where ASSF requests are approved, is one way to reduce ASSF “misuse.” A second ongoing effort is the reengagement of the ANA below the Corps level by advisor teams to enhance the combat capabilities of ANA Brigades and Kandaks. A third measure currently underway is to produce formal Concepts of Employment for each element of the ASSF that are agreed upon by all stakeholders and signed by the highest levels of GIRoA to reinforce the authority of these documents. Lastly, we must also recognize, leave room for, and encourage Afghan innovation, as they have and will continue to develop their own solutions to the challenges they face.

### **Afghan Air Force**

**In addition to the ASSF, the Afghan Air Force is frequently mentioned as one of the most effective branches of the ANDSF. In the last 18 months it has undergone major expansion in terms of capability and capacity.**

**What is your understanding of the progress in training and employing the Afghan Air Force?**

Over the past three years, the Afghan Air Force significantly improved its strike, close air support, airdrop, and mobility capabilities while significantly reducing civilian casualties. Progress includes close air support with laser guided munitions and conducting 50% of CAS missions in 2017. Sustainable maintenance programs and the introduction of the UH-60 will round out a truly capable Afghan Air Force. Election material distribution and collection across 7,300 polling station, fielding of the UH-60, training of Afghan Tactical Air Controllers and leadership replacement will be milestones and tests of the Afghan Air Force’s performance in 2018.

**What are the most critical enabling capabilities needed by the Afghan Air Force to ensure successful mission execution in 2018 and beyond?**

Improved UH-60 capacity through aircraft delivery and pilot training gradually replaces the aging Mi-17 fleet and is improving the AAF’s organic mobility capacity. Additional A-29s and

the new AC-208s will improve strike and Air-Ground Integration capabilities in all corners of Afghanistan over the next several fighting seasons. Finally, the TAAC-Air advisor growth plan will provide tailored advisor support as the Afghan Air Force continues to mature. Maintenance and sustainment training will continue to be most critical.

**Given questions raised about the ability of the Special Mission Wing (SMW) to operate and maintain its planned fleet of aircraft, what is your assessment of the SMW's development, performance, and overall importance to the operational success of the ASSF?**

I am told that the SMW has developed into the premier rotary wing aviation unit in Afghanistan. It has enjoyed the advantages of continual partnership, coupled with low turn-over, since 2005. Additionally, a long-lasting relationship between the SMW and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense-Counternarcotics and Global Threats has built a unit that leads the ANDSF in terms of anti-corruption, accountability, and performance. The SMW is critical to the ASSF because the distances to be covered, the impassibility of much of the terrain, and the threat posed to the ground force all demand rotary wing lift and organic ISR capabilities. The SMW continues to increase its internal capacity to maintain its rotary and fixed wing aircraft.

**Currently as much as 80% of Afghan Air Force maintenance is performed by contractors. Additionally, RSM has routinely identified a shortage of Afghan candidates to recruit as aircraft maintainers as a critical gap.**

**What is your understanding of the strategy to ensure that the Afghan Air Force is a sustainable force now and into the future?**

As I understand the strategy is to ensure a sustainable Afghan Air Force is embodied in the National Logistics Strategy-Air (NLS-A), which prescribes a gradual transition of responsibility for aviation maintenance and logistics—organizational, intermediate, and depot—from the current Contractor Logistics Support (CLS) to the Afghan Air Force. There is an ongoing effort and a gradual process that has only begun in 2017 and will continue through AAF modernization. Of note, even US military aviation units utilize contract maintenance support albeit in a much smaller percentage. The goal is to steadily increase the percentage of maintenance performed by the Afghans themselves.

### **U.S. Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan**

**How do you see the role of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) in Afghanistan evolving throughout 2018 and beyond, especially given the arrival of the 1<sup>st</sup> Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB)?**

Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO) and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO) will continue to exploit ungoverned or contested spaces within Afghanistan until the Government of

Afghanistan is able to extend its influence and governance. Special Operations Forces (SOF), in partnership with our Afghan partners, will be required to destroy these FTOs and VEOs to protect our homeland and to buy GIRoA the time and space needed to grow and be successful.

**Are there concerns that the resources needed to effectively employ the SFAB may take away from those available for SOF operations? If so, how do you propose to mitigate such issues?**

I understand that resources required to employ the SFAB do, in some cases, compete with combat enablers available for other missions. However, the additional rotary wing, CAS, ISR which were added as part of the South Asia Strategy have made this a manageable challenge. Through efficient de-confliction and prioritization of enabler capabilities countrywide, we can achieve the proper balance of support from existing resources in theater.

### **Afghan Local Police/Afghan Territorial Force**

**While the Afghan Local Police (ALP) has been assessed as an important element of local security and counterterrorism efforts, the ALP has also been criticized as a source of human rights violations, corruption, and misuse by local power brokers.**

**What is your assessment of the effect of the ALP program on rural Afghan populations and what has been the response from the Taliban?**

I am informed that the Afghan Local Police (ALP) meet Afghan security needs in specific areas by providing a visible deterrent at the local level. As the first line of defense against insurgent activity, they are often targeted by these forces. The Taliban target the ALP because they threaten insurgent access to the population and restrict insurgent freedom of movement.

**What is your understanding of the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to continue its support for the ALP program through 2018 and beyond?**

I have been briefed that the Afghan future force concept manages ANDSF training, manning, and equipping to meet security challenges within the constraints of an uncertain budget. As part of this concept, the Afghan Local Police will continue to operate in areas where the Ministry of the Interior deems them effective. The Afghan Government continues to view the ALP as a viable option to meet the security needs of the rural population on a case by case basis.

**What is your understanding of the role of the new Afghan Territorial Force? How will it supplement and/or replace the ALP? What will be its relationship with the ANA and ANP?**

I understand that the Territorial Force is part of the Army. It is not a police force or rebranding of the ALP. The Territorial Force meets President Ghani's intent to provide an effective, affordable,

and sustainable local security force. The Territorial Force recruits Soldiers from the districts and villages it protects, but its leadership comes from the ranks of the regular Army. It is recruited “regionally”, but is trained “nationally” meaning all ANATF Soldiers receive the same basic training as regular ANA Soldiers. The Territorial Force serves as a ‘hold force’ to provide security in the more permissive environments, relieving the regular Army forces of static duties to allow them to maneuver and focus on offensive operations in contested areas. As the ANATF is fielded more widely in 2019 and beyond, USFOR-A and GIRoA will review the fielding of ALP in relation to the ANATF.

**What steps are being taken to ensure the proper training and employment of the ALP and Afghan Territorial Force, and their accountability regarding potential human rights violations?**

The Territorial Force recruits receive the same training as their regular Army counterparts at the Kabul Military Training Center. The recruits are screened, and receive 12 weeks of basic training, which includes a program on human rights, with training monitored by the NATO mission. The Territorial Force is commanded and led by regular Army officers and noncommissioned officers, and will be integrated into the brigades and corps in the areas in which they operate. The NATO mission, in conjunction with the United Nations Aid Mission Afghanistan, is advising and assisting the Ministry of Interior in improving training including human rights, reporting procedures, and supervision of the ALP.

**Pakistan**

**What is your assessment of the role and importance of Pakistan to the security situation in Afghanistan?**

Pakistan’s cooperation is vital to the success of our South Asia strategy. Achieving long-term stability in Afghanistan will be difficult without Pakistan’s support, but it will not be impossible. Pakistan has made many sacrifices in the war against terrorism; its people have suffered greatly and its security forces have fought bravely. My understanding is that we have not yet seen these counter-terrorism efforts against anti-Pakistan militants translate into definitive actions against Afghan Taliban or Haqqani leaders residing in Pakistan.

**In your assessment, has the South Asia Strategy altered Pakistan’s willingness to contribute towards stability and security in Afghanistan? Positively or negatively?**

Since the August 2017 announcement of the South Asia Strategy we have seen incremental positive changes in Pakistan’s behavior towards Afghanistan, particularly in the effort to improve its bilateral relationship with our Afghan partners. Those changes however, have not been decisive nor are they irreversible. We still look for conclusive evidence that Pakistan shares our vision of a secure and stable Afghanistan. Reduction in violence and Taliban sincere participation in a peace process would be indicators of progress with which Pakistan can assist.

**In what areas do you think the United States and Pakistan should seek to collaborate with regard to the mission in Afghanistan?**

We look to Pakistan to ensure that its territory is not used by terrorist groups to attack or otherwise menace neighboring states. We expect Pakistan to contribute to an end to conflict in Afghanistan by exerting whatever influence it has on the Taliban to lower violence and participate in the peace process. Improved cooperation in the trade of goods and services and the movement of people will contribute greatly to our goal of stabilizing Afghanistan. Pakistan's own stability and prosperity will benefit from peace in Afghanistan.

**What steps would you take to mitigate Pakistani malign influence in Afghanistan?**

We seek to partner with Pakistan and look to the support of like-minded countries to persuade Pakistan that its interests are only served through increased cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan. Pakistan has much to gain from supporting the efforts of the 39-member coalition that is working to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.

**Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan**

**In the last few months RSM has undertaken Operation JAGGED KNIFE, an effort to degrade Taliban finances by disrupting narcotics networks.**

**What is your understanding of the nexus between the drug trade and the various insurgent groups in Afghanistan?**

My understanding is that Afghanistan is the world's largest supplier of opium, generating up to \$6.6 billion annually according to a recent United Nations estimate which exceeds the amount contributed to Afghanistan's Gross Domestic Product by licit agricultural crops. 90% of this activity occurs in Taliban controlled or contested areas. Insurgent and criminal groups generate significant revenue in various ways from this source of funds. This is assessed to be the Taliban's largest revenue source. The groups not involved directly in producing narcotics, enrich themselves by taxing the crops and the illicit product, extorting protection fees, and tolling transportation as the product is moved and exported to addicts and drug cartels worldwide.

**What is your understanding of the other sources of funding the Taliban relies on?**

I understand the sources of revenue beyond narcotics include illegal mining; taxation on crops such as pine nuts, pistachios and lumber; extortions; kidnapping for ransom; protection and transportation fees on licit goods and agriculture. My information is that the Taliban also benefit from state support, and support from sub-state donations in the region.

**How effective do you assess current counternarcotics efforts have been at degrading Taliban abilities to finance their operations? How do these efforts compare to previous counternarcotics efforts that the United States has taken a number of times over the past 17 years?**

If confirmed I will conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of the military's role in our counternarcotics efforts. From a military perspective I am told that the authorities granted under President Trump's South Asia Strategy have allowed targeting of enemy revenue streams and financial networks. The impact of this new pressure on the Taliban's finances has been faster and more disruptive than anticipated and has forced the Taliban to make financial trade-offs between logistics and operations. These are not counter-narcotics efforts per se but counter-Taliban revenue efforts.

**In your estimation, has the use of significant military assets, man-hours, and munitions been an effective use of such resources? Has there been a significant return on investment in the counter-narcotics line of effort?**

If confirmed, I will be in a position to make a more detailed assessment of this line of effort. However, I do support the notion that compelling the Taliban to accept diplomatic engagement with the Afghan government will only come from simultaneous pressures through a whole of government approach. Military pressure is key, but depriving the Taliban of funding is also an essential element.

**If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to enhance U.S. counter-threat financing efforts in Afghanistan?**

The National Security Council has laid out a good, classified set of efforts that we should continue to pursue. Intelligence and diplomatic resources in theater could be enhanced with reach-back capabilities here to support those on the front lines. I know the interagency Counter Threat Finance Steering Committee in Kabul has outlined goals and objectives for the near term to enhance efforts and move forward along the NSC's lines of effort. Interagency coordination and international cooperation and support will also help move forward in taking steps such as naming and pressuring the countries and groups that are financially supporting the Taliban; punishing financiers and bankers who profit from Taliban financing; and disrupting those financiers' ability to continue to do business and enrich themselves, even while they enable terrorism against the Afghan people and boost drug and criminal cartels around the globe. This is a global threat and treating it as such will enhance the U.S. counter-threat financing efforts.

### **Anti-Corruption**

**The Afghan Government has undertaken a number of efforts to reduce the threat of corruption across the government. However, Afghanistan currently ranks 177<sup>th</sup> out of 180 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.**



**What is your assessment of the Afghan anti-corruption efforts to date?**

I understand that corruption in the Afghanistan security system has been pervasive, but measures to combat corruption are making progress. Full implementation of the Afghan Pay and Personnel System, or APPS, is an important anti-corruption effort which will significantly reduce the problem of "ghost soldiers." I am told that APPS will reach a major implementation milestone at the Ministry of Defense by July 2018, and at the Ministry of Interior by November 2018. The mission reduced fuel corruption by taking full management of the fuel contract and implementing a system where contractors only get paid if they can produce a delivery receipt from a designated recipient. Another key counter-corruption measure is implementation of the "Inherent Law," which is forcibly retiring ineffective military and police leadership, and generating replacements based on training and experience. The fuel and pay reforms help protect over a billion dollars of U.S. tax-payer funds.

**What risk does wide-spread government corruption pose to RSM train, advise, and assist efforts? To the overall U.S. mission in Afghanistan?**

Wide-spread government corruption potentially undermines everything the U.S. and NATO missions seek to achieve.

**What additional steps, if any, do you believe should be taken to improve those efforts and to ensure that investments made by the United States and the international community are able to be appropriately applied and sustained?**

Countering corruption is an essential element of everything we do in Afghanistan. If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate additional steps to counter corruption in the Afghan security forces and improve stewardship of U.S. and NATO resources. Several new measures seem promising: U.S., NATO, and Afghan officials have trained counter-corruption evaluators in the Ministry of Defense and are implementing counter-corruption training at the Afghan National Police Academy. I am informed that in May 2018, Afghan officials proposed several additional measures, including asset disclosure requirements for senior government officials and appointment of Inspector Generals at the Chief of Defense and Ministerial levels.

**Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**

**The Department of Defense has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve the prevention of and response to incidents of sexual assaults, including providing appropriate resources and care for victims of sexual assault.**

**What is your view of the steps taken to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in Afghanistan, including assaults by and against U.S. civilian and contractor personnel?**

## UNCLASSIFIED

The Department of Defense has implemented structured training with Command oversight, such as our Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) training. This training ensures that our Service Members, DoD civilians, and contractors are aware and trained on the prevention of sexual assault as well as how to respond if one is reported. Victims also have access to a variety of reporting and support services.

### **What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources in place in Afghanistan to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?**

The training and resources required to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault are appropriate. Our criminal investigators are highly trained and given the resources necessary to collect evidence, interview subjects and witnesses, and compassionately work with victims. There are also 2 special victim counsel detailed in Afghanistan to provide immediate counsel and support to victims.

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

I assess that if Commanders lose their disposition authority over violations of the UCMJ, our ability to enforce good order and discipline will be negatively impacted. Commanders are entrusted - based upon their experience and objectivity - to lead, advise, train, and mentor our Service Members. We should be trusted to use that same experience and objectivity when evaluating the evidence of an offense, including sexual assault. Commanders are not alone in this process, as we have trained, experienced legal advisors to advise commanders on tools available to prevent misconduct and to advise commanders regarding command decisions to be made upon notification of an allegation, throughout the investigative process and through the entirety of the military justice and/or adverse administrative action processes.

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

Commanders like me have the tools to take appropriate action to ensure that Service Members can report without fearing retaliation or other repercussions. Those tools include restricted reporting by victims and expedited transfers. Under the protections currently in place, commanders have the ability to positively and quickly address sexual assault reporting concerns by demonstrating support for victims and ensuring that victims know the resources available to them.

### **What is your view of the role of the chain of command in maintaining a command climate where sexual harassment and sexual assaults are not tolerated?**

The Chain of Command is pivotal for maintaining a positive command climate where sexual assaults and harassment are not tolerated. It is a Commander's responsibility to publish his or her

policy on sexual harassment and sexual assault to all Service Members within their command, as well as enforce training standards on awareness, prevention, and response. Responsibility resides at all levels within the chain of command.

**How are commanders held accountable for failing to adequately address the command climate with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault?**

If a Commander fails to adequately address the command climate with respect to sexual harassment and sexual assault, appropriate actions should be taken, to include removal from command if necessary.

**Can commanders be held accountable for failing to bring perpetrators to justice without exercising unlawful command influence?**

Unlawful command influence is always an important concern for commanders, and subordinate commanders should not be influenced in their decisions or punished if a higher level commander disagrees. If a Commander does not believe that probable cause exists that a subject committed an alleged offense, they should have the authority to exercise their judgement. If a higher Commander disagrees with the lower Commander's assessment, they have the authority to pull the action to their level and move forward on any charges they believe meet the threshold of probable cause. The lower Commander should not be punished if, in their subjective judgement, the evidence did not meet the required threshold, even if a higher Commander disagrees.

**In your view, do commanders have the tools and resources needed to hold commanders accountable for these issues? If not, what additional authority do they need?**

Yes. We have the tools and resources needed to hold Commanders accountable. With the training and guidance currently provided to Commanders throughout their careers as they are developed as leaders and prepared for increasing responsibility and command, they are educated on and provided the tools they need to continue to combat sexual assault within our ranks.

**Suicide Prevention**

**What is your assessment of the suicide prevention program in Afghanistan?**

The suicide prevention program in Afghanistan is effective. The prevention mission requires education, training, and willingness to intervene prior to a Service Member's decision to act on suicidal ideation. Commanders are responsible for regular unit resiliency training, implementation of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) – which is a Chaplainled suicide first aid program, and leveraging Combat Operational Stress Control personnel and resources. Organic unit behavioral health capabilities for prevention and education are also available. Continuing to train commanders on these resources remains important.

**In your view, are the mental health resources in Afghanistan sufficient to care for service members in the area of responsibility?**

Yes. Behavioral Health resources are currently sufficient to care for Service Members deployed in Afghanistan. A Combat Operational Stress Control detachment (9 personnel), along with embedded behavioral health providers, and Telebehavioral Health (VTC connection with behavioral health specialists) at 12 locations provide support throughout the country. Further, a 5-day Reset Program in Kuwait is available to Service Members deployed in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel. This program reports a 98% success rate in keeping personnel deployed/in theater after treatment.

**Congressional Oversight**

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

**Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of Congress?**

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 RSM Commander/Commander, USFOR-A?**

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 to ensure that testimony, briefings, and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?**

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

**(Added) Are you held to a Force Manning Level and do you require additional resources to accomplish the mission?**

I understand we have sufficient force to accomplish the mission. The increase coincident with implementation of the President's South Asia Strategy is all we require. To optimize our support of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, we focus on doing what only the United States can do through our unique bilateral agreements with Afghanistan by prioritizing CT forces, advisors, advisor security, and enablers. This ensures we maximize our support directly at the point of need where we can improve the offensive capability of the Afghan forces. 2018 will mark the first full fighting season where all components granted by the South Asia Policy are in place. In February, CENTCOM's main effort shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan. In March, the Security Force Assistance Brigade arrived in full. By the end of June, all additional combat enablers to include rotary wing assets will be on the ground. U.S. forces will continue the air campaign initiated at the end of the 2017 fighting season.