

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF
Nominee for Appointment to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Duties and Qualifications

Section 151 of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the President and the Secretary of Defense, section 153 of title 10 further assigns the Chairman responsibility for assisting the President and the Secretary in providing for the strategic direction of the armed forces; strategic and contingency planning; global military integration; comprehensive joint readiness; joint capability development; and joint force development activities, among other matters.

- 1. Given the responsibilities of the Chairman, as enumerated in law, what background, experience, and expertise do you possess that qualify you to serve as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?**

In my over 38 years of military service, I've had the honor of leading and serving in the world's most respected Air Force alongside Total Force Airmen—Active, Guard, Reserve, and Civilians, the Joint Force, and our allies and partners. My assignments have covered issues from the operational to the strategic and have ranged from flying in combat, to serving on joint and component staffs to ensuring the Air Force accelerates the change necessary for us to remain the most dominant Air Force in the world. For the past 14 years and over 8 different assignments, I have been in leadership positions focused on the five national security challenges--China, Russia, North Korea, Iran, and Violent Extremists. As Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and throughout my career, I've had the privilege of supporting not only service members, but their families as well. These experiences have prepared me for the humbling responsibilities of being Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, if confirmed.

- 2. Do you believe there is any action that you need to take to enhance your ability to exercise the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?**

If confirmed, I would carefully consider any actions that would enhance my ability to exercise the responsibilities of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; I do not have recommendations at present.

In matters requiring global military strategic and operational integration, the Chairman is responsible for providing advice to the President and Secretary of Defense on ongoing military operations and advising the Secretary on the allocation and transfer of forces among geographic and functional Combatant Commands, as may be necessary to address transregional, multi-domain, and multifunctional threats.

3. If confirmed, how would you execute these advisory functions, while ensuring that your role does not invoke command authority or infringe on the responsibilities of the Combatant Commanders?

I am keenly attuned to the distinction between the Chairman's advisory functions and the command authority and responsibilities of the Combatant Commanders.

If confirmed, I would conduct the Chairman's advisory functions by maintaining detailed awareness of ongoing and emerging issues within or across the Combatant Command areas of responsibility. Where tensions between resourcing and other requirements may exist, I commit to communicating my resultant advice to the President and Secretary of Defense, always cognizant of the chain of command as described in law.

4. If confirmed, how would you structure your relationship with the Combatant Commanders to effect these responsibilities?

If confirmed, my relationship with the Combatant Commanders would be structured based on the existing mechanisms and procedures in law and policy.

5. If confirmed, and given your observations and experience as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what innovative ideas would you consider providing to the Secretary of Defense regarding the organization and operation of the Joint Staff?

I do have some perspectives on potential opportunities based on my experience over the past decade plus. If confirmed, I would carefully evaluate and consider the organization and operation of the Joint Staff before recommending any changes.

I will continue to deepen my understanding of Goldwater Nichols Act history, current and past Joint Staff operations, processes, and organizational construct, as well as the most recent rounds of defense reforms codified in several National Defense Authorization Acts.

Additionally, several Congressionally mandated Commissions have or are performing invaluable service on topics such as artificial intelligence, strategic posture, and the Department's Planning Programming and Budget system. I'd like to take a deeper look at this work to inform any innovative ideas or recommendations I might provide to the Secretary of Defense.

6. To the extent the Joint Staff performs functions that overlap with those of other DOD Components—particularly with regard to regional or functional topics—what would be your approach, if confirmed, to consolidating and reducing those redundancies?

If confirmed, I would carefully consider this issue before recommending any changes. I am aware that Congress worked with the department to look at these issues in the past.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

7. What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you would face if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

Significant shifts in geopolitics and technology are converging with efforts by China and Russia to contest the post-World War II international order. Our alliances endure but are subject to stress and pressures catalyzed by intensifying and accelerating trends. The Joint Force, along with our Allies and partners must now rapidly build appropriate capabilities and capacities to deter, and if necessary, prevail in great power conflict.

Our greatest challenges are not necessarily always those presented by our adversaries, but there are areas of improvement we need to address with more discipline and urgency.

For instance, we need to improve collaboration and sharing with trusted and new partners, whether foreign militaries or in various commercial sectors. Time is not on our side.

Our greatest asset is the American people - and the spirit of inspiration and innovation that have made this country a global leader. DoD needs to recruit and retain some of America's best to defend the Nation, while finding better ways to collaborate with America's finest in other domains and pursuits. The same applies to collaboration with our allies and partners.

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

If confirmed, I intend to establish a better understanding of where we are and where we can improve on achieving the most critical priorities in our strategies and concepts. I am committed to open dialogue and collaboration to achieve our national security goals. With this approach, I think I will be in a better position to work within the Department and with Congress to share my thoughts and advice. I look forward to engaging with you to seek your counsel and input.

9. Are there significant opportunities that, in your view, DOD and the Joint Staff have been unable to leverage (or have leveraged only in part) during the period of your service as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

I believe we can continue to innovate within existing capabilities and capacities, while simultaneously building new opportunities based on our emerging strategies and concepts. Doing so will require cross-cutting dialogue with a sense of urgency and a willingness to change to advance national security objectives, to enhance warfighting capability and capacity, and to enhance deterrence.

There are a few opportunities that I'd like to highlight where I would like to offer my office and energy, if confirmed.

- We need to continue building an environment where all our service members and their families can reach their full potential. This will need to be done in collaboration with DoD leaders and the civic leaders and communities that support our bases.
- There are opportunities to increase emphasis on non-materiel efforts in DoD – education and training, experimentation, and public-private partnerships. These need to be better coupled with the materiel programs and initiatives of the Department.
- There are opportunities to build stronger relationships with the commercial sector and emerging technologies, both within the U.S. and with our allies and partners.

10. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that DOD and the Joint Staff leverage these opportunities, and on what timeline?

If confirmed, I would make significant effort within my authority and empower others within my span of control to encourage innovation and initiative at speed and scale.

If confirmed, I would also make a swift and considered assessment through the lens of the threat environment to inform specific initiatives and milestones.

Civilian Control of the Military

11. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that your tenure as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff epitomizes the fundamental requirement for civilian control of the Armed Forces embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other laws?

I am fully committed to the laws, policies, and norms associated with civilian control of the United States Armed Forces and look forward to working collaboratively with the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Congress is a key partner in fortifying our nation’s civil-military foundation.

I would seek to maintain and fortify the trust of the Executive Branch, Congress, and the citizens we defend. This includes supporting the Department’s civilian leadership to advance the implementation of the National Defense Strategy in ways consistent with our nation’s civil-military laws, policies, and norms.

I would also work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combatant Commanders to affirm civilian control across our collective roles, responsibilities, and organizations.

12. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy are fully engaged in preparing guidance for and reviewing contingency plans?

I support a collaborative planning relationship among civilian and military

organizations consistent with the roles and responsibilities articulated in law and policy.

If confirmed, I would examine the efficiency, effectiveness, and alignment of our current planning processes and constructs in achieving our national security objectives. I would consult with the Department's civilian and military leadership to guide and inform any recommended actions or adjustments.

I welcome continued dialogue with Congress.

13. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to ensure that the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness are fully engaged in evaluating and reporting on the readiness of DOD Components, and if necessary, in mitigating readiness gaps and shortfalls?

The Chairman has specific responsibilities articulated in law and policy to ensure the comprehensive joint readiness of the force in the present, and the future.

I am committed to ensuring the Department's civilian and military leadership are fully engaged and informed to evaluate the readiness of DoD components to execute the National Defense and Military strategies. I will deepen my understanding of the extensive set of issues, processes, and existing efforts to improve our Department's decision-making and reporting about joint force readiness, including alignment with other related processes.

I will work with Congress, a key partner, to build and sustain comprehensive joint force readiness.

14. How would you define effective civilian control of the military? Aside from civilian control of the military via the Executive Branch, please describe the extent to which you believe Congress plays a role in furthering civilian control of our military?

Congress is a critical stakeholder and partner in the American tradition of civilian control of our military.

Congressional roles and responsibilities for oversight and funding of the military depend on a regular and trusted dialogue at multiple levels of DoD-Congressional interaction.

We are at a critical moment in geopolitics and technological change that will require improving existing ways, new ideas, and harnessing the power of America's powers of innovation and inspiration.

I believe it is imperative that we sustain robust Congressional oversight and the necessary and on-time funding as key components of civilian control. But DoD also welcomes Congress' ideas and leadership to make many of the necessary changes to retain

our competitive military advantage.

If confirmed, I will strive to be your best partner, while affirming civilian control in both the Executive and Legislative Branches.

15. As a military officer, you take an oath to support and defend the Constitution. How do you balance this obligation with the responsibility to provide your best military advice to civilian leadership, even when that advice may differ from civilian political priorities?

I view these responsibilities as complementary and reinforcing.

Military advice should help provide options to our Nation's civilian leaders that support policy, while providing professional military judgments about the associated strategy, risk, readiness, and resource considerations.

16. In your view, what is the appropriate role for the Department when supporting law enforcement in state or national emergencies?

DoD should be prepared to support civilian law enforcement agencies consistent with the legal limitations on direct DoD involvement in civilian law enforcement activities. DoD support to law enforcement should be considered against military readiness requirements to execute the National Defense and Military Strategies.

If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, you will testify regularly before Congress, and may be asked to comment on partisan political matters.

17. What is your view of your responsibility to provide your best military advice to Congress while also ensuring that you and your office remain apolitical, recognizing that you serve as a model for other senior uniformed officers and the entire armed forces?

If confirmed and as I've done as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, I am committed to maintaining regular and open lines of communication to ensure Congress can exercise its oversight duties in an informed and timely manner. My engagements will remain apolitical, and I am cognizant that my actions serve as a model for other senior uniformed officers and the entire armed forces.

Throughout my tenure, the Office of the Chairman and Joint Staff would speak and act with the utmost respect for American civil-military tradition and norms. I would expect no less from the Joint Chiefs and Combatant Commands. Together, we would seek to continuously earn your trust, and that of the American public.

Chain of Command

Section 162(b) of title 10, U.S. Code, provides that the operational chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the Commanders of the Combatant Commands. Pursuant to Section 163(a) of title 10, the President has directed that communications between the President or the Secretary of Defense and the Commanders of the Combatant Commands be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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

Yes, I believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command.

19. In your view, how does this chain of command and chain of communication effectuate civilian control of the military?

The chain of command facilitates effective civilian control of the military, provides for clear lines of communication, and promotes accountability, as intended by the Goldwater Nichols Act. The chain of communications facilitates the Chairman's responsibility to oversee and advocate for Combatant Commanders, while synthesizing Combatant Commander perspectives into military advice to civilian authorities.

Section 163(a) of title 10 provides that the President may assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in exercising their command function.

20. In your view, are there other roles or responsibilities that should be assigned to the Chairman, to better enable the Chairman's assistance to the President and the Secretary of Defense in their exercise of command functions?

At this time, I believe the roles and responsibilities currently assigned to the Chairman are sufficient, and do not have recommendations for any additional roles and responsibilities.

If confirmed, I will perform the duties of the Chairman with an open mind and consult with the Secretary and with Congress should I conclude there are additional roles or responsibilities that should be considered.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

Section 151 of title 10, U. S. Code, codifies the role of the Joint Chiefs as military advisors to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

21. What is your assessment of the authorities and process by which you and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would provide military advice and opinions to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense?

The FY2017 NDAA enhanced the roles of the Chairman, the other Joint Chiefs, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a corporate body, to provide military advice to civilian leaders. As a member of the Joint Chiefs for three years, I have seen this provision implemented, and I assess the authorities and process as sufficient and appropriate for providing military advice and opinions to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

22. If confirmed, would you commit to provide your best military advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council, even when your advice and opinions might differ from those of other members of the Cabinet, the President's other senior advisors, or from the President's own views?

If confirmed, I am committed to providing independent military advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Homeland Security Council, even when my advice may differ from views of other cabinet members, the President's other advisors, or the President himself.

This is a fundamental part of performing my duties faithfully and responsibly, and in alignment with the Chairman's statutory responsibilities.

23. If confirmed, would you commit to provide your best military advice to the Secretary of Defense, even when your advice and opinions might differ from those of other DOD senior officials, or from the Secretary's own views?

Yes.

24. If confirmed, how would you elicit from the individual Service Chiefs, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the Combatant Commanders, their best military advice, including advice and opinions that may diverge your own?

If confirmed, I would foster an environment that encourages dialogue across a range of views and ideas, to include dissenting and alternate viewpoints. I would faithfully represent the range of ideas and views of the JCS and Combatant Commanders to our civilian leaders.

25. If confirmed, how would you inform the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, of the advice or opinion of another member of the Joint Chiefs, which may differ from advice you have presented on a matter?

In the instances where a Joint Chief offers a recommendation or has views different than my own, I have a duty to present alternate or dissenting views. When appropriate, I would facilitate communication between my JCS teammate and the principal to ensure effective and informed communication.

26. If confirmed, what would be your response upon being advised that other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, individually or collectively, intend to provide their advice on a matter directly to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, the Secretary of Defense, or the Congress?

If confirmed, I would ensure that the President, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and Secretary of Defense receive a well-considered range of views, expertise, and information. Should other members of the Joint Chiefs, individually or collectively, elect to provide advice directly, I would facilitate JCS communication with civilian leadership, while maintaining both awareness and engagement.

Strategic Guidance Documents within the Department of Defense

27. If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specifically what would be your role in generating and shaping the content of, and improving DOD component compliance with, each such document?

- **National Security Strategy**

The NSS outlines how the U.S. will advance its interests and pursue a free, open, prosperous, and secure world. It provides strategic direction for DoD and the interagency in the pursuit of national security objectives. If confirmed, as the Chairman I will provide my military advice to support the NSS.

- **National Defense Strategy**

The NDS directs the Department to act urgently to sustain and strengthen U.S. deterrence with the PRC as the pacing challenge. If confirmed, as the Chairman, I will provide military advice to the Secretary of Defense to help shape those priorities and then direct the NMS to develop the ways and means to meet those objectives.

- **National Military Strategy**

The NMS outlines the ways and means to support the NDS objectives. It provides strategic direction for the Joint Force, and, if confirmed, as the Chairman I will support and provide my military advice on implementation of the NMS.

- **Chairman's Risk Assessment**

Title 10 directs the Chairman to prepare an annual assessment that identifies and defines the military strategic risks to United States interests and military risks to the execution of the NMS. The Chairman's Risk Assessment (CRA) is developed in collaboration with the Services and Combatant Commands (CCMDs), with the final approval and discretion of the Chairman, using a common methodology to appraise and communicate risk. If confirmed, I

will continue to use the CRA as my recommendation to the Secretary of Defense and ultimately Congress on risks to U.S. interests and executing the NMS across the Joint Force.

- **Contingency Planning Guidance**

The Chairman directs the implementation of the Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG) and integrates contingency planning across Combatant Commands for each of the NDS key threats. The Chairman uses the guidance in the CPG in the development of the NMS and Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP). Additionally, the Chairman provides guidance for preparing and reviewing contingency plans that conform to policy guidance from the President and Secretary of Defense. Lastly, the Chairman ensures that plans are feasible, suitable, acceptable, and complete for presentation to the Secretary. If confirmed, I will continue directing the implementation of the CPG and its use in the development of the NMS and JSCP.

- **Defense Planning Guidance**

The Defense Planning Guidance (DPG) establishes the Secretary of Defense's strategic resource priorities. If confirmed, as the Chairman I would produce the Chairman's Program Recommendation (CPR) which directly informs the DPG. I would consider a multitude of assessments to include the annual Capability Gap Assessment, Chairman's Risk Assessment, and others to ensure the Joint Force aligns means to ends and ways, in light of risk, allowing me to provide the best strategic advice possible.

- **Joint Strategic Campaign Plan**

The Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP) enables the execution of the Chairman's statutory responsibilities for strategic and contingency planning, global military integration, and the Chairman's oversight prescribed in Title 10, U.S. Code, Sections 153, 163, and 113. If confirmed, I would use the JSCP to operationalize the NMS into actionable tasks for global military leaders.

- **Global Force Management Implementation Guidance**

The Global Force Management Implementation Guidance (GFMIG) allows the Secretary of Defense to integrate complementary policy and guidance on directed readiness, assignment, allocation, apportionment, and assessment into a single authoritative document. If confirmed, my role is to advise the Secretary of Defense on matters of readiness and requirements of the CCMDs. Additionally, I advise the Secretary of Defense on matters of risk related to allocation and assignment of forces to better support resource-informed planning and enable the force to be dynamically employed.

28. What is your understanding and evaluation of DOD's processes for strategic assessment, analysis, decision-making, and reporting for each of the aforementioned strategic guidance documents?

The Department has a robust process for strategic assessment, analysis, and decision making to include several cross-departmental senior leader decision-making forums, in addition to informal processes such as the Chairman's Joint Strategic Planning System. If confirmed, I will continue cross-departmental collaboration to ensure decision-making processes are

supported by all the rigorous analyses and assessments, and properly synchronized across the Joint Force. Key priorities include providing the right data at the right time to inform senior decision makers and maintain strategic discipline to ensure long-term viability of the Department's capabilities.

29. If confirmed, what recommendations would you make to update, improve, or make these reviews and guidance more impactful and useful to the Department and to Congress?

The Joint Staff currently provides thorough analysis and review of all the previously mentioned reviews and guidance, incorporating inputs from across the Joint Force. If confirmed, I would encourage the Joint Staff to continuously seek to improve and align processes and products in order to clearly communicate to the Department and Congress in a timely manner.

30. Will you commit that, if confirmed, you would undertake all necessary action to ensure that each of these strategic guidance documents is timely generated and issued, and updated, as necessary to reflect changes in assumptions, policy, or other factors?

Yes

Use of Military Force

31. In your view, what is the appropriate role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in establishing policies for the use of military force and the rules of engagement?

The President, as Commander-in-Chief, determines when to use military force. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are advisors to the President and the Secretary of Defense and should actively advise on the policies for the use of military force and the rules of engagement.

32. If confirmed, what factors would you consider in making recommendations to the President and the Secretary of Defense on the use of military force?

If confirmed, my recommendations to the President and Secretary of Defense on the use of military force will be consistent with U.S. domestic and international law. Additionally, I would consider probability of success, cost in terms of casualties, and strategic risk.

33. What is your understanding of your role, if confirmed, in the application of the Administration's policy and legal framework for the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force?

The 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force provides a legal basis for operations against certain violent extremist organizations. If confirmed, I would ensure Joint Force operations are consistent with the policies of current and past administrations expressed in reports on the Legal and Policy Frameworks Guiding the United States Use of Military Force

and Related National Security Operations.

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

Yes, at present, we have the legal authorities to carry out U.S. counterterrorism operations at the necessary and appropriate level.

35. In your view, is a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force needed at this time? Please explain your answer.

The current AUMF provides the authority necessary to conduct current operations.

36. What factors would you consider, if confirmed, in recommending to the Secretary of Defense which forces of other nations should be eligible for Collective Self-Defense by U.S. forces, and under what conditions?

When “collective self-defense” rules of engagement are authorized, U.S. forces may defend foreign forces against any attack or threat of imminent attack. If confirmed, the key factors I would consider in a recommendation to the Secretary of Defense would be the legality of “collective self-defense” for the situation in question and if its execution is in the interests of the U.S.

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

Normally, the U.S. armed forces operate under the established Title 10 chain of command. However, there may be appropriate instances for the President to establish other temporary command relationships due to certain sensitive military operations. Regardless of the command relationship, U.S. military personnel are still accountable to the Title 10 chain of command and are subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Furthermore, any operations the armed forces support are governed by the law of armed conflict. If confirmed, I would give the President my advice in any instance where an exception to the Title 10 chain of command may be warranted.

38. What is your understanding and assessment of the authorities and agreements in place to permit U.S. military personnel to carry out missions under the provisions of title 50, U.S. Code? If confirmed, how would you modify these agreements or authorities, if at all?

I understand that relevant authorities and agreements provide the necessary framework for military forces to support activities of other U.S. Government departments and agencies when called upon by the President or Secretary of Defense as the situation dictates. I believe

that the current authorities and agreements are sufficient. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing work within the Department and with colleagues in other U.S. Government departments and agencies to adjust existing arrangements as the need arises.

Civilian Casualties

In August 2022, the Department released a Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan (CHMR-AP) to address various aspects of the Department's policy, processes, and procedures related to investigating and responding to civilian casualty incidents.

39. In your view, what are the primary challenges for the combatant commands in mitigating, investigating, and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

The largest hurdles are timely receipt of allegations and access to evidence necessary to investigate. Implementation of CHMR-AP will assist Combatant Commands to learn and share best practices to improve Joint Force responses.

40. What is your understanding of the implementation status of the CHMR-AP and what additional actions do you believe need to be taken to enable the Department of Defense to more effectively mitigate, investigate, and respond to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

DoD is currently focused on hiring requisite personnel to implement the Action Plan. I agree with Secretary Austin that the highest CHMR-AP implementation priorities for the Department are continuing to hire requisite staff, continuing to stand up the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence to serve as the DoD's hub of analysis, learning, and training related to CHMR, and publishing a new DoD Instruction on CHMR to formalize Departmental policies, responsibilities, and procedures related to CHMR.

41. Do you believe the combatant commands are sufficiently resourced for mitigating, investigating, and responding to allegations of civilian casualties resulting from U.S. military operations?

Yes. However, the Department can always improve our performance. Implementation of CHMR-AP will assist the Joint Force to improve. We are in the process of staffing the Department, to include the combatant commands, with the personnel necessary to effectively implement CHMR-AP.

42. When civilian casualty allegations arise, do you believe they should be investigated by personnel sufficiently independent of the unit or task force which conducted the strike?

I believe civilian casualty allegations should be assessed and investigated in accordance with the Secretary of Defense's direction in the CHMR-AP. The CHMR-AP directs each

Combatant Commander to designate a senior official to serve as the Civilian Harm Assessment and Investigation Coordinator to oversee assessment and investigation processes, and who will be responsible to the Combatant Commander for assessments conducted under his or her purview.

43. How can the Department more effectively capture and share lessons learned from civilian casualty investigations so they can be incorporated into future operations?

I support the Secretary of Defense's vision for the nascent Civilian Protection Center of Excellence (CP-CoE) to institutionalize the advancement of knowledge, practices, and tools for preventing, mitigating, and responding to civilian harm. The CP-CoE will be the hub and facilitator of Department-wide analysis, learning, and strategic approaches, and will help institutionalize good practice for CHMR during operations.

Joint Operations

The Goldwater Nichols Act enabled an unprecedented degree of jointness within the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Combatant Commanders. Today, both the DOD and Congress recognize the need for a deeper level of integration and interoperability to overcome anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) networks and to deter and defeat large-scale aggression.

44. How would you characterize the jointness that is needed today?

The progress that the Goldwater Nichols Act enabled with respect to joint operations remains foundational for our ability to deter and if necessary, prevail in today's security environment. The growing sophistication of current and future threats requires us to move beyond integration between Services. To succeed we must integrate jointly across combatant command boundaries, domains (including cyber and space domains), the whole of government, and with our allies and partners to successfully sustain integrated deterrence.

45. What do you perceive to be the role and capability requirements for close combat formations in future joint force operations?

The ultimate role of combat units (including close combat) will always be to engage and destroy the enemy. The future warfighting environment will not obviate the need for close combat formations. The changing character of war, specifically the rapidly expanding importance of doctrine that informs commanders how to leverage the electro-magnetic spectrum, information, space, and cyber capabilities; requires us to reevaluate required capabilities and capacity, and how we build, train, and employ the Joint Force. The Joint Warfighting Concept is the unifying vision for Joint Force development, design, and warfighting approach.

Service led joint and coalition experimentation events are improving interoperability

and identifying critical gaps.

46. What is the Joint Staff's appropriate role in experimentation?

The Joint Staff has two roles in experimentation. First, it should manage integrated campaigns of learning to examine specific problems, gaps, and critical capabilities described in the Joint Warfighting Concept. Second, with its limited ability to prioritize joint funding on experimentation it should prioritize experimentation for joint peculiar problems that are highlighted through concepts or capability gaps.

47. How would you ensure the Joint Staff is appropriately facilitating joint experimentation during the capabilities development process?

The Joint Staff is organized to facilitate joint experimentation in synch with the capability's development process. If confirmed, I would continue to integrate and synchronize experimentation not only across the Department of Defense but also with the Interagency and our allies and partners.

48. What role do you foresee playing in influencing joint and enabling capabilities development that will link or knit together service-specific capabilities, such as Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) or contested logistics?

The recently released Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) provides a framework to determine which Service specific capabilities need to be more closely integrated. If confirmed as the Chairman, I would continue to use the JROC as an advisory council to inform my advice to the Secretary of Defense on requirements. Specifically, the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) process was created to support the statutory responsibility of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) to validate joint warfighting requirements from Combatant Commands and Services which include CJADC2 and contested logistics.

The JROC and JCIDS processes and combined Joint Staff collaboration with the Combatant Commands and Services identify the integration and interoperable capabilities the Joint Force requires to operate across all warfighting domains. These requirements will be communicated through the Chairman's Program Recommendation to ensure the Services understand and apply resources against our most critical operational priorities.

Joint Force Headquarters and Component Commands

49. Is the current model for creating joint force headquarters below the unified command level appropriate and adequate to meet the challenges articulated in the 2022 NDS? In your view, are there other models you have seen that we should be considering?

The current model is appropriate and adequate, but if confirmed, I will examine joint force headquarters models.

50. Given the time required to stand up, man, and train joint force headquarters, and the short warning time that is expected before a potential conflict in certain areas of operation, would Combatant Commanders' operations and contingency planning and preparedness be improved by creating and exercising subordinate joint force headquarters during the competition phase?

Creating a subordinate joint force headquarters prior to emergence of crisis could improve operations, planning, and preparedness depending on the specific circumstances. Doing so would require analysis to determine if and when early establishment is warranted considering priorities for manpower allocation, staff actions, and expense across the Joint Force. If confirmed, I will examine this possibility with the Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs.

51. The fiscal year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the Secretary of Defense to establish a standing joint force headquarters (JFHQ) in the INDOPACOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). What is your view on the need for a JFHQ in this AOR?

The Indo-Pacific is the U.S. military's number one area of focus and China is the pacing challenge. When the DoD is called on to respond to international crises, we use the Joint Force to quickly integrate forces and capabilities across the military services. Creating a Joint Force Headquarters in the AOR can improve the Combatant Commanders' operations, contingency planning, and preparedness. For USINDOPACOM, the time to create and appropriately staff a JFHQ, and establish their communication and coordination channels across the military services, U.S. government agencies, and allies and partners is ahead of crisis. In accordance with the NDAA, I believe it is prudent to conduct mission analysis to define requirements and take the steps to establish a JFHQ in USINDOPACOM to enable persistent, all-domain awareness and credible deterrence against our adversaries.

52. What are the most significant obstacles to establishing and exercising such joint force headquarters in advance of a crisis, and what could be done to overcome those obstacles, in your view?

Our combatant commanders are appropriately staffed to manage day-to-day operations up to crisis. Prematurely establishing a joint force headquarters in contingency pulls resources from other global operations and activities. However, if confirmed, I will examine this possibility with the Combatant Commanders and Joint Chiefs.

53. What new technical capabilities, processes, or concepts of employment do you think would be needed to improve our ability to achieve high levels of readiness for, and realistically exercise, such joint force headquarters prior to a crisis, or to rapidly establish in the event of an unforeseen crisis?

Our combatant commanders maintain a high level of readiness for establishing joint force headquarters and regularly exercise and test their ability to do so in advance of an unforeseen crisis. The joint force is always looking at emerging technical capabilities, processes, and concepts, and we regularly conduct joint exercises to help develop and improve processes as well as inform concepts. If confirmed, I will continue these efforts to identify opportunities to achieve high levels of readiness.

2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS)

The 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) identified China as the “most consequential strategic competitor and the pacing challenge for the Department” and stated that Russia poses an “acute threat,” as illustrated by its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The NDS also identifies “mutually beneficial Alliances and partnerships” as “an enduring strength for the United States.”

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

The 2022 NDS was developed with the military advice from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Force. In my view, it accurately assesses the current strategic environment and articulates the position of the Joint Chiefs with appropriate focus on the PRC as our pacing challenge and Russia as the acute threat.

55. The National Military Strategy (NMS) underscores the importance of “ruthlessly prioritizing” to ensure the right balance is struck between long-term modernization investments on the one hand, and near-term efforts to enable INDOPACOM and EUCOM to deter and counter aggression by our pacing competitors. In your view, are their examples that substantiate this assertion?

Yes, and I would be willing to discuss further in a classified setting.

56. In your view, does the 2022 NDS correctly specify the priority missions of the DOD and the capabilities by which DOD can achieve its objectives in the context of the current strategic environment? What do you perceive as the areas of greatest risk?

I believe the priorities established in the 2022 NDS are correct for the current strategic environment and that China will remain the most consequential strategic competitor for the immediate future, while Russia, as a major nuclear power, still constitutes an acute threat. Our greatest risk, however, is our ability to continue to address the current strategic environment at a level needed to deter aggression while preparing for an uncertain future. I would be willing to discuss more detail in a classified setting.

57. In your view, are the plans and programs of the Commanders of the Combatant Commands appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to counter the threats and achieve the national security objectives identified by the 2022 NDS?

Yes. I believe the plans and programs of the Combatant Commanders are appropriately focused, scoped, and resourced to achieve the 2022 NDS national security objectives within acceptable levels of risk.

58. In your view, are the forces of each of the Military Services appropriately sized, structured, postured, and resourced to implement the 2022 NDS and the Combatant Commanders' associated operational plans? Please explain your answer.

I believe the Military Services can field sufficient, capable forces to meet the requirements established in the 2022 NDS. I also believe that their current posture and structure is appropriate to address the demands of the directed CCMD operational plans, within acceptable levels of risk. I would be happy to go into this in more detail in a classified setting.

59. Do you believe the Joint Staff has the requisite analytic capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in evaluating the Military Services' force design, force structure and sizing strategies, and requirements for acquisition programs, to ensure that each Service can and will generate forces that are manned, trained, and equipped to execute the operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

DoD continually strives to deliver robust analytics supporting future joint force design and development to meet NDS priorities. If confirmed, I will commit assessing and making any recommendations to ensure the Joint Staff has the capability, capacity and tools to evaluate the Joint warfighting capabilities of the United States, its allies and partners against those of potential NDS priority adversaries.

60. Do you believe the Joint Staff has, or has access to, the requisite modeling and simulation capabilities and tools to support you, if confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in assessing whether the Combatant Commanders' operational plans can and will achieve the national security objectives identified by the 2022 NDS? Please explain your answer.

Yes, the warfighting modeling and simulation tools we have help assess and refine war plans in partnership with the Combatant Commands and Service Components. These tools help us determine the warfighting merit of operational plans and explore alternative approaches in pursuit of better warfighting options. It is through these comparative analyses that we better understand and refine operational plans; but none are predictive.

61. In your view, are the Combat Support Agencies properly designated, structured, and manned to support implementation of the 2022 NDS and execution of the Combatant Commanders' operational plans? Please explain your answer.

Combat Support Agencies (CSAs) are designated, structured, and manned to support implementation of 2022 NDS and Combatant Command (CCMD) operational plans. As required by Title 10, the CJCS submits biennial assessments to Congress of the responsiveness and readiness of each CSA to support the CCMDs. While each assessment highlights areas for improvement, to my knowledge none have identified major shortfalls that require changes with respect to designation, structure, or manning.

62. If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to the missions and responsibilities (including geographic boundaries) of the Combatant Commands, better to implement the 2022 NDS?

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the results of the Congressionally directed independent review of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), to include recommendations on alternative UCP structures.

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

I have none at this time but, if confirmed, I will continue supporting the NDS implementation periodic reviews and if I think changes are required then I will advise the Secretary of Defense at that time. Concurrently, I will periodically review the National Military Strategy implementation, which details specific military policies required to meet the guidance contained in the National Defense Strategy.

64. If confirmed, what would you do if you determine that the DOD cannot meet the demands placed on it by the 2022 NDS?

If confirmed, I will constantly assess demands and work to ensure our forces are postured appropriately, identify risks, and take steps to mitigate. I will also work closely with allies and partners to advance military interoperability and burden-sharing to help decrease risk globally and strengthen our ability to meet current and future defense challenges.

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

Current Title 10 responsibilities for the Chairman include providing advice relating to global military and strategic and operational integration. If confirmed, my recommendation would be to ensure that the guiding policy documents including National Defense Strategy and Contingency Planning Guidance are aligned and reflective of strategic global integration.

By doing this, I can ensure that the National Military Strategy and associated Joint Strategic Campaign Plans are formulated in a way that is consistent with national policy directives and valid assumptions to strengthen the nation's ability to respond in accordance with our National Security Strategy.

66. How do you see the role of DOD within a broader whole-of-government effort to compete strategically with near-peer rivals below the level of direct military conflict?

The DoD performs an essential role in whole-of-government competition with near-peer adversaries through the NDS concept of integrated deterrence and campaigning to achieve enduring advantages. Integrated deterrence and campaigning requires the Department to align its policies, investments, and activities to sustain and strengthen deterrence, tailored to our competitors, and coordinated and synchronized with our interagency partners and allies and partner nations to maximize the effect. At the core of the 2022 NDS is the concept of Integrated Deterrence and Campaigning ranging from our strategic nuclear deterrent to our conventional activities that include annual military exercises, rotational deployments, civil-military engagements, professionalization of partner militaries, and security cooperation activities with our allies and partners. DoD forward presence and operations, activities, and investments deter adversaries to prevent crises from escalating into conflict. DoD also provides necessary support to the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of national power, backing those efforts through military diplomacy, strategic messaging, a range of military investments, and when required, the threat of force. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Secretary's guidance and provide advice on how the Joint Force can support a whole of government effort to preserve the peace and ensure security for the nation and our allies and partners.

Department of Defense Budget

67. In your view, are the programs and resources required to generate the capabilities necessary to implement the 2022 NDS properly prioritized within the Department of Defense? If confirmed, do you believe the Department needs to realign or refocus programs and funding, if at all?

The FY24 budget is strategy-driven and focused on executing the NDS. I am confident we have the right mix of capabilities and capacity to defend against current and future threats. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department in aligning resources to strategy.

In its 2018 report that evaluated the previous NDS, the National Defense Strategy Commission recommended that Congress increase the Department of Defense (DOD) base defense budget at an average rate of three to five percent above inflation through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP).

68. Do you believe that 3-5% real budgetary growth through the FYDP is required to implement the 2022 NDS effectively? Please explain your answer.

What's more important than a specific percentage of real budgetary growth through the FYDP is ensuring that our annual budgeting cycle closely analyzes operational risk and is aligned to our strategy. Additionally, on time appropriations enable the Department to execute its strategy with the resources required at the time needed to fulfill national security objectives.

69. Looking forward, what types of resource shortfalls are likely to hamper the Department's execution of the 2022 NDS and other national defense priorities in your view? How would you address or mitigate these shortfalls, if confirmed?

The PB24 request adequately resources the Department to execute the 2022 NDS. Where I do see risk is in the possibility of a Continuing Resolution that will delay the appropriations of those resources and our ability to execute them. If confirmed, I will continue to work with the Congress and advocate for on-time appropriations so that we may fully capitalize on the resources the American taxpayers are entrusting to us for their national defense.

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

70. What are your views of this statutory requirement and the utility of unfunded priorities lists?

The Department relies on several tools to illuminate our joint priorities and develop a budget that is aligned to strategy. While the unfunded priority lists are required by law, they are not the only tool we rely on to build a strategy-informed defense budget.

71. If confirmed, would you commit to supporting the Service Chiefs and Combatant Commanders in providing their unfunded priorities lists to Congress in a timely manner, beginning with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 budget request?

If confirmed, I will support the Service Chiefs and Combatant Commanders continued compliance with the law.

Joint Officer Management

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wields significant influence over joint officer management—the policies and procedures that guide joint officer career development and the attainment of joint experience and education. The NDAA for FY 2017 modified the Joint Qualified Officer (JQO) system established by the Goldwater-

Nichols Act in two significant ways. First, it broadened the statutory definition of “joint matters” to expand the types of positions for which an officer can receive joint duty credit. Further, it reduced from three years to two the minimum tour length required for joint duty credit.

72. What is your assessment of the effectiveness of the FY 2017 modifications to the JQO system?

The two significant modifications have provided the Department additional flexibility in our Joint Qualification System. The expansion of the “joint matters” definition has ensured the ability to award joint duty credit to additional officers making contributions to the development and achievement of strategic objectives. The reduced statutory tour length required for joint duty credit has provided the Services additional flexibility in officer assignment for tightly managed career timelines and milestones.

73. In your view, are the requirements associated with becoming a JQO, and the link between attaining joint qualification and eligibility for promotion to General/Flag (G/FO) officer rank, consistent with the operational and professional demands of Service line officers?

Yes. Although careers are managed according to Service specific milestones and operational demands, the 24-month minimum joint tour and associated JPME completion for joint qualification are appropriate and greatly enhance an officer’s perspective and knowledge to perform at the GO/FO ranks.

74. In your view, what additional modifications to the JQO system are necessary to ensure that military officers are able to attain both meaningful joint and Service-specific leadership experience, and adequate professional development?

The existing joint officer qualification requirements provide a tested and flexible means to ensure officers develop the skills necessary for successful service at the operational and strategic levels; as such, I don’t see the need for any additional modifications to the JQO system at this time.

75. What are your ideas for improving the JQO system better to meet the needs of Reserve Component officers?

Major changes to the JQO system were made in 2007 to incorporate Reserve Component officers and the Reserve policy was adjusted in 2018 to increase joint qualification opportunities for Reserve Component officers. I do not currently recommend changing the JQO system with respect to the Reserve Component.

76. Should the requirement to be a JQO be eliminated as a consideration in selecting officers for promotion and assignment?

No. JQO requirements enhance the ability of General/Flag officers to operate effectively in the joint environment at the operational and strategic level. Officers who meet the requirements provide benefit to both the Services and joint organizations, and ultimately the Department as a whole.

77. If confirmed, what modifications would you suggest to provide DOD and the Military Services the force management and talent management tools necessary to recruit, develop, sustain, and retain a 21st century, joint, All-Volunteer Force?

If confirmed, I will continue to work with OSD and the Service Chiefs to assess talent management strategies to maintain our competitive edge and strengthen the lethality of the All-Volunteer Force. I also solicit assistance from our Congressional leaders to help the American people know what it means to serve, and thereby encourage military service.

78. Do you believe current DOD and Military Service procedures and practices for reviewing the records of officers pending the President's nomination for promotion or assignment are sufficient to enable fully informed decisions by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President?

Yes, in my experience as CSAF, the Services evaluate officer qualifications, past performance, future potential, and any available adverse or reportable information, and each service has a rigorous process in place to ensure all decisions are fully informed.

79. In your view, are these procedures and practices fair to the individual military officers proceeding through the promotion or assignment process?

Yes. I believe these procedures and practices are fair and reasonable for the officers involved.

Joint Professional Military Education (JPME)

80. Based on your assessment of the threats facing the United States, now and in the future, what knowledge, skills, and abilities will officers need to succeed in great power competition against the nation's adversaries?

Our education and training programs must provide an integrated approach to understanding joint warfighting and our adversaries from accession to senior leader courses for general and flag officers and senior enlisted leaders within the context of a rapidly changing character of war. Future leaders require the knowledge and skills to prepare them for service as joint warfighting leaders, senior staff positions, and strategists who:

- a) Discern the military dimensions of a challenge affecting national interest;
- b) Anticipate and lead rapid adaptation and innovation during a dynamic period of

acceleration in the rate of change in warfare under the conditions of great power competition and disruptive technology;

- c) Conduct joint warfighting, at the operational to strategic levels, as all domain, globally integrated warfare, including the ability to integrate allied and partner contributions;
- d) Are strategically minded warfighters or applied strategists who can execute and adapt strategy through campaigns and operations; and
- e) Demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills, interpersonal skills, and effective written, verbal, and visual communications skills to support the development and implementation of strategies and complex operations.

81. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to enhance DOD's JPME system to ensure that it fosters the education and development of a cadre of strategic thinkers and planners with the intellectual acumen, military leadership proficiency, and sound judgment to lead the joint force in a transregional, multi-functional, multi-domain "Whole of Government" environment?

If confirmed I will regularly review the program of instruction of each Service's War College, their Staff Colleges, and Senior Enlisted PME. We must develop strategically minded joint warfighters, who think critically and can apply military power creatively to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations, and fight under conditions of disruptive change. To do this, we must create a fully aligned PME and talent management system that identifies, develops, and utilizes, joint warfighters skilled in the art of war and the practical and ethical application of military power.

82. In your view, to what degree does the Secretary of Defense Strategic Thinkers Program, established by Directive-type Memorandum-19-001, add to the current PME system?

I think we need to delineate between "strategists" - those who can imagine and write strategy from a blank page, and the "strategically-minded" - those who can effectively execute strategy through campaigns and operations. The former are rare and the new Defense Strategic Thinkers Program will help develop such individuals. The NDS language refers to the latter, the development of which is a responsibility of the larger JPME system. The inaugural execution of this program has promise, and if confirmed, I look forward to ensuring its success.

83. In your view, how could the Department further increase the throughput of the current 10-week, in-residence course required to achieve JPME II accreditation, consistent with the need for training in joint skills in advance assignment to the Joint Staff or a Combatant Command, while enhancing the course's academic rigor?

I do not currently see a need to increase throughput in the 10-week resident JPME II course. If confirmed, I intend to assess the broader Professional Military Education needs of

the Joint Force (from accession to senior leader education) with an eye towards rigor in all academic curriculum. I will seek to ensure the timing and throughput for curriculum align with the needs of the force.

84. In your view, are there opportunities in JPME to improve STEM cognizance and cyber fluency across the joint force to ensure that leaders understand and can effectively employ technologies to fight and win our nation's wars?

Establishing STEM knowledge is foundational to several of our PME institutions—the Naval Post-Graduate School, the Service Academies, and the Air Force Institute of Technology for example. Many of our officers enter service with excellent undergraduate STEM backgrounds. In recent years, all JPME programs have amplified student literacy in cyber topics. The war colleges are increasing the levels of student learning as the integration of the cyber domain in all-domain warfighting becomes more and more profound. Work remains to be done for understanding and integrating disruptive technologies. This will be one of my priorities for PME if confirmed.

85. In your view, is there a role for JPME in developing basic product management skills across the joint force to ensure that military leaders are proficient in the employment of software and automation in warfighting?

There is absolutely a role for JPME in preparing our military leaders to understand how to fully realize our warfighting potential using artificial intelligence/machine learning and automation. Currently, JPME prepares our leaders to make sense of the future battlefield through intricate knowledge of how Joint Force fights. Without the professional knowledge our leaders develop through JPME, commanders cannot make use of the tools that automation brings to bear. At the same time, JPME must raise the automation acumen for our leaders to understand the non-physical side of the future battlefield.

Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Section 156 of title 10, U.S. Code, requires the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to be selected by a board of officers convened by the Secretary of Defense. To this day, the Chairman's Legal Counsel remains the only joint duty officer selected from among qualified officers of the Armed Forces in this manner.

86. Do you consider the board selection process required by section 156 to be an effective and efficient process for selecting an officer to serve in this critical joint position?

Yes, I believe the selection process for the position of the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an effective, efficient, and equitable means to select an officer for this position from a pool of talented judge advocate leaders across the Services.

87. What lessons, if any, have been captured from this joint process that could improve the selection board processes used by the Military Services?

I'm not aware of any lessons that could improve the processes for selection of officers in the military service. The process to select the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was informed by the best practices of all of the Services.

88. Would you support expanding application of the process employed to select the Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to other joint officer positions? Why or why not?

I do not see a need to expand our selection process to other joint billets. The current, well-established processes used to select general/flag officers to joint positions are sound. First, our process for identifying officers gives the Combatant Commander and the Chairman flexibility. We can select from across the Services (to include the Coast Guard) and the Active, Guard, and Reserve Components to ensure we get the right individual with the appropriate skills and experience. Second, the current process is efficient in that it gives the commander and other senior leaders an opportunity to quickly review a slate of nominated officers and conduct interviews as necessary. Finally, our process is extremely responsive to emerging or unexpected requirements. We can quickly alert the Services to identify eligible personnel, select candidates, nominate them, and have them in position in as little as 90 days, if necessary.

Alliances and Partnerships

The 2022 NDS underscores the importance of existing U.S. alliances and partnerships and considers these relationships our greatest global strategic advantage. Interactions with the Armed Forces of other nations are often conducted at the level of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

89. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take to strengthen existing U.S. alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage new opportunities for international cooperation—in each Combatant Commander's geographic area of responsibility?

The National Defense strategy is a call to action for the defense enterprise to incorporate allies and partners at every stage of defense planning. If confirmed, I will continue to integrate our highly capable and frontline allies and partners into our planning efforts, operations, activities, and investments. Foreign language capabilities are a key component in allowing for the development of relationships and trust with our foreign allies and partners. Our Foreign Area Officers play a crucial role in achieving the National Defense Strategy objective to strengthen alliances. Including these capabilities in the planning process is key to ensuring integration and interoperability with our allies. I will personally continue to engage in regular dialogue with my ally and partner counterparts to understand their strategic concerns and identify areas for cooperation.

If confirmed, I will ensure that our Global Campaign Plans include actions to strengthen alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage new opportunities for international cooperation. The Chairman of the Joint Staff, working in tandem with the Combatant Commands, is uniquely suited to energize our ally and partner networks to respond to such global security challenges. If confirmed, I will engage with longstanding allies, traditional partners, and look to expand relationships with new partners. This will be a priority of mine from day one.

In INDOPACOM, if confirmed, I will focus on modernizing our alliance with Japan by aligning strategic planning and priorities in a more integrated manner, enhancing our combined operating capability and deterrence posture with the Republic of Korea, and deepening our alliance with Australia through investments in posture and interoperability.

In EUCOM, I will continue to build and lead the coalition of allies and partners supporting Ukraine while working alongside our NATO Allies to deter, defend, and build resilience against further Russian military aggression.

In CENTCOM, I will prioritize cooperation with our regional partners that results in their increased ability to deter and defend against Iranian aggression.

In AFRICOM, I will prioritize working “by, with, and through” our African partners to build states’ capacity to degrade terrorist organizations and contribute to security and stability, supporting implementation of the Global Fragility Act.

In SOUTHCOM, I will take specific actions to remove bureaucratic and policy roadblocks in order to strengthen existing alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage opportunities for international cooperation and education.

NORTHCOM is a unique COCOM for partner and allied security cooperation. I will continue to nurture our bilateral relationship with Canada and continue our efforts towards NORAD modernization and improved coordination on security cooperation engagement world-wide to ensure our two countries efforts are complementary. I will also continue to foster the strong mil-to-mil relationship between the United States and Mexico, which has grown substantially under USNORTHCOM, to confront shared challenges.

If confirmed, CYBERCOM, SOCOM, SPACECOM, and TRANSCOM provide additional opportunities to strengthen relationships with allies and partner and leverage new opportunities in cooperation with the geographic COCOMs.

90. What do you see as the greatest challenges for strengthening existing alliances and partners or building new partnerships, including for building interoperability and developing shared operational concepts? What are the primary tools at DOD’s disposal for addressing these challenges?

Information sharing is the greatest challenge for strengthening existing alliances and partners,

especially when it comes to interoperability and developing shared operational concepts. If confirmed, I will promote a culture of information releasability within the Joint Force and champion to remove barriers to information sharing and technical cooperation with our highly capable and frontline allies and partners. The most effective tool that could be made available to the DoD to build interoperability are carve outs for pre-approval in the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITARS) for our closest and most capable allies.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM)

AFRICOM does not have any assigned forces and, as a result, is required to compete for forces in the global force management process.

91. What is your assessment of the availability and predictability of forces and capabilities to support the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan and other emergency requirements?

In alignment with the 2022 NDS guidance, AFRICOM has adequate allocated forces in addition to CONUS based regionally aligned forces ready to rotate into the USAFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) to execute operations in support of the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan. Additionally, current posture allows forward staging of forces to provide required operational flexibility and a timely response to emergency requirements.

92. Are there any changes you would implement to the allocation or assignment of forces to AFRICOM, if confirmed?

Before providing any recommendations for changes to the allocated or assigned forces to AFRICOM, if confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's requirements for forces and risk assessment of the strategic environment on the African Continent within the framework of the 2022 NDS guidance.

The 2022 NDS states that the United States will “accept measured risk, but remain vigilant in the face of other persistent threats, including those posed by...violent extremist organizations. We will also build resilience in the face of destabilizing and potentially catastrophic transboundary challenges such as climate change and pandemics.”

93. Do you believe DOD has allotted adequate posture and resources to “remain vigilant” in the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR)?

Current allocated posture and resources are adequate to “remain vigilant” in the AFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) with in 2022 NDS guidance. However, if confirmed, I will work with the AFRICOM Combatant Commander to evaluate requirements and requests for forces and assess risk based on the rapidly changing strategic environment on the African continent.

94. What is your assessment of current U.S. approach to strategic competition in the AFRICOM AOR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to DOD lines of effort in support of these strategies?

The U.S. approach to strategic competition in the AFRICOM AOR is adequate and in line with current NDS guidance. If confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's assessment of the current strategic competition environment before making any recommendations for changes to DoD lines of effort in support of these strategies.

95. What is your assessment of current U.S. counterterrorism strategies being executed in the AFRICOM AOR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you propose to these strategies?

I agree with the current strategy to disrupt terrorists in Africa in order to protect the U.S. homeland and vital U.S. national interests abroad. USAFRICOM accomplishes this mission primarily by, with, and through African partners, European allies, and multinational organizations. USAFRICOM's approach reaffirms enduring U.S. security commitments while building partner capacity and capabilities toward a long-term goal of these partners conducting sustained operations with minimal U.S. presence and resources. If confirmed, I will consider the Combatant Commander's assessment of the current strategic competition environment before making any recommendations for changes

96. What is your assessment of the efficacy of the current U.S. strategy to compete against Russia and China to be the security partner of choice in Africa?

The current U.S. strategy focuses on building our partners, working toward shared objectives, operating transparently, promoting good governance, and respecting human rights, while highlighting that Russian and Chinese projects do not adhere to high standards and can come with unseen, sometimes negative, consequences. Our competitive edge lies in the quality of the equipment, training, and other security assistance we provide, and our commitment to relationships based on true collaboration with our African partners, which neither China nor Russia currently supplies.

Increasing the speed of delivery for commonly sought-after equipment, demonstrating our commitment and prioritization of African needs at a high level, and developing positive messaging that will resonate with African leaders' aspirations. I look forward to working with Congress to achieve these goals.

97. How will you seek to engage with African partners on resiliency efforts as outlined in the 2022 NDS?

If confirmed, I will build upon existing resilience-related efforts that began after the 2022 NDAA, and that are supported through implementation of the Global Fragility Act. I will look for efficiencies and overlap between Combatant Commands, particularly between AFRICOM, SOUTHCOM, and INDOPACOM, to improve our unity of effort as it relates to challenges posed by climate and environmental change. These efforts foster trust among and

are essential to our approach to build allies and partners capabilities to confront these shared issues together.

Somalia

98. What is your assessment of current U.S. national security interests in Somalia?

Our current National Security Strategy directs a “secure Somalia free from terrorist threat to the U.S., its citizens, and U.S. facilities overseas.” These interests are appropriate and drive our internal policies focused on protecting U.S. persons and assets overseas, while degrading VEO capabilities to execute operations in Somalia and against the continental U.S.

99. What role, if any, do you believe the United States should play in helping Somalia build capable security institutions?

To pursue our stated national security interests in Somalia, it is critical that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) have a stable security environment, which is the foundation of a successful democracy. This must be enabled by professional, civilian led, security institutions who are not only tactically proficient, but also well versed in ethics and the rule of law. Our strategy to achieve this is through a “partner-led, U.S.-enabled” approach, where we will work “by, with, and through” our partner nations to ensure U.S. interests are safeguarded. To support this approach, the U.S. should continue to assist in building the capability and capacity of Somali security institutions to combat violent extremism and expand a stable security environment.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)

100. To what extent does achieving U.S. national security interests in the Middle East require a continuous U.S. military presence in the region, in your view?

The National Security Strategy directs the Department to “retain the necessary American military presence in the region to protect the United States and our allies from terrorist attacks and preserve a favorable regional balance of power.” AQAP and ISIS originate in the Middle East, both of whom are responsible for attacks on the U.S. and our allies. Iran destabilizes the Middle East, threatening regional security through its proxy forces and desire to obtain nuclear weapons. We must maintain an adequate level of U.S. military presence to decrease threats against the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests and to help build indigenous security capability of our regional partners. If confirmed, I will continue to assess the adequacy of U.S. military presence and make recommendations to support the CENTCOM Commander’s requirements.

101. How do you view the National Defense Strategy as shaping U.S. force posture in the Middle East?

The NDS force planning priorities of defending the homeland, maintaining strategic

deterrence, and prevailing in conflict all require a well-integrated force. As the Department's efforts continue to be focused on China, theaters such as CENTCOM will rely on risk mitigation rooted in deterrence, such as committing available resources differently and relying on allies and partners. The Department must shape the Joint Force to campaign in a way that reinforces deterrence and protects U.S. interests in the region.

102. What opportunities exist for increasing burden-sharing with U.S. regional and European partners to counter threats emanating from and affecting the CENTCOM AOR?

Our partners understand that in order to maintain their preferred strategic relationships, they will need to shoulder more responsibility for regional security. For the military, this is best achieved by building partner security forces through U.S. defense item sales and with training.

Coalition partners support Operation INHERENT RESOLVE and opportunities exist for increased burden sharing throughout all aspects of operations: defense, diplomacy, and development. Partner Nations could also share an increased portion of the burden for logistics, training, stabilization, humanitarian, and financial support throughout the broader region.

103. To what extent do you view the CENTCOM AOR as important terrain for strategic competition?

With China as our pacing strategic challenge and Russia re-emerging as a strategic concern, the CENTCOM AOR will continue to be vital for strategic competition.

The CENTCOM AOR is the doorway to global energy supply for our allies and partners as well as China.

Multiple CENTCOM AOR locations control the flow of global maritime commerce and are key to China achieving its economically strategic one-belt, one-road initiative.

CENTCOM AOR military access, basing, and overflight enables the Joint Force to operate and project power to ensure regional and global security. These would be critical in times of conflict to rapidly re-supply or deploy the Joint Force as well as counter Chinese or Russian moves.

104. In your view, how can the United States counter Russian influence in the CENTCOM AOR?

Countering Russian influence in the CENTCOM AOR relies on the continued capacity and capability of our allies and partners. While Russia continues to build a burgeoning relationship with the Iranian regime, the U.S. has opportunities to strengthen the capacity of our partners to limit susceptibility to Russia's predatory practices.

Continued efforts in innovation on the battlefield, multi-domain show-of-force exercises like Juniper Oak, and further development of concepts such as the Joint All-Domain Command and Control demonstrate the U.S. as a valuable partner that leverages multi-domain solutions to counter malign actors in the region. We do this in part by offering tailored and quality equipment through foreign military sales that liberate our partners from the predatory nature of Russia's military sales practices. FMS remains an invaluable tool equip, train, and build our partner forces so that they remain interoperable with the US and our Allies. Efforts to streamline the FMS process and make the FMS enterprise more responsive to our partners are critical efforts by the USG.

105. In your view, can the United States counter Chinese influence in the CENTCOM AOR?

The U.S. approach to countering Chinese influence in the CENTCOM AOR relies on sustainable military posture, strengthening partner capacity, enabling regional security integration, deterring and countering threats, and ensuring freedom of navigation and the free flow of global commerce.

The U.S. leverages these strengths to de-escalate tension in the region, and counter malign influence while driving normalization between our partners and allies. The U.S. is postured to sustain its commitments to partners and address security challenges, including those related to the PRC, regardless of Chinese efforts.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

106. In your view, what are the current U.S. strategic interests in Afghanistan?

The United States has a vital national interest to prevent terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a base for planning and executing attacks against the U.S. homeland, U.S. citizens, and our interests and allies abroad. The United States must continue engagement with partner countries and support ongoing humanitarian assistance efforts to promote stability in the region. Our foreign military sales to partners in the region deliver quality military capability that outcompetes with Chinese equipment at every benchmark. FMS remains an invaluable tool equip, train, and build our partner forces so that they remain interoperable with the US and our Allies. Efforts to streamline the FMS process and make the FMS enterprise more responsive to our partners are critical efforts by the USG. The United States also intends to honor its commitment to help Afghans who stood by us during our military engagement come to the United States under available legal pathways.

107. In your opinion, is the United States adequately postured to conduct effective over the horizon counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan? Please explain your answer.

Yes, the Joint Force remains organized to effectively conduct regional counterterrorism without U.S. military forces on the ground in Afghanistan. We leverage

intelligence capabilities and partnerships to maintain understanding of terrorist activities in and emanating from Afghanistan. Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, the U.S. has continuously refined its CT posture to maximize understanding of VEO operations and intentions, and we stand ready to take actions to disrupt any threats to our homeland or interests abroad should it be required. We leverage multiple capabilities to maintain an understanding of enemy networks in Afghanistan. Key capabilities include Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance aircraft, human intelligence networks, and a coalition of partners in and beyond the region.

108. In your opinion, has the Taliban shown the willingness and capacity to undertake counterterrorism efforts against ISIS? Against al Qaeda?

The Taliban has taken aggressive action against ISIS affiliates in Afghanistan. The U.S. government continues to press the Taliban to meet their commitment to the Doha Agreement and prohibit any terrorist organization from planning attacks from Afghanistan, including the remnants of Al Qaeda in the region.

109. What do you assess to be the strategic relationship between the United States and Pakistan? Do you view that relationship as having changed as a result of the transition of forces from Afghanistan in August 2021? If so, how?

The United States military maintains a constructive relationship with Pakistani counterparts to counter extremist threats and promote regional stability. The withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan did not change the strategic rationale for our relationship with Pakistan.

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

My objective would be to preserve the defense relationship between the United States and Pakistan in areas of mutual interest. We need to maintain military-to-military ties to address concerns and remain focused on regional stability and counterterrorism efforts.

Syria and Iraq

111. What is your assessment of the current threat posed by ISIS?

ISIS was territorially defeated in March 2019. Since then, ISIS has worked to recruit and reconstitute its forces and capabilities. It has failed to do so. This failure is directly attributable to the ongoing efforts of the Operation INHERENT RESOLVE mission, our coalition partners, including the Syrian Democratic Forces and Iraqi partners who execute most of the C-ISIS mission. If the constant pressure of the C-ISIS efforts were to subside then I would expect to see an ISIS resurgence and increase in threat. ISIS still maintains its financial network, communications network, recruiting apparatus, and satellite cells globally. ISIS also espouses an ideology which remains strong with the party faithful, and this ideology still poses a threat that, without relentless pressure, could cause ISIS to resurge once

again.

112. What is your understanding of the current U.S. strategy and objectives in Syria?

The U.S. military mission in Syria remains the enduring defeat of ISIS and we continue to work by, with, and through our partners and allies. The current administration has identified four policy priorities to meet the U.S. objective for a political settlement to the conflict as envisioned in UNSC Resolution 2254:

- Sustaining the U.S. and coalition campaign against the Islamic State;
- Supporting local ceasefires;
- Expanding humanitarian access;
- Pressing for accountability and respect for international law while promoting human rights and nonproliferation, including through targeted sanctions imposition.

113. In your view, should U.S. troop levels in Syria be tied to the achievement of certain conditions on the ground? If so, and if confirmed, what conditions would you factor into your recommendation to the Secretary of Defense on future troop levels in Syria?

The operational environment in Syria remains uncertain and dynamic. U.S. forces have drawn down to a residual presence in Syria to maintain counterterrorism and security operations. If confirmed, any potential future troop level or capabilities changes would have to be assessed based on numerous variables to include regional security objectives, the existing and projected security environment, and sustaining the necessary relationships and partner force capabilities to prevent an ISIS resurgence and secure our enemy's enduring defeat.

114. What is your understanding of current U.S. strategy and objectives in Iraq?

The U.S. strategy has sought the enduring defeat of ISIS and rebuilding of independent Iraqi Security Forces. To achieve these ends, the Coalition is currently helping the Iraqi Security Forces to consolidate gains, improve their military and security capability, and evolve into a more professional and representative force that is capable of countering an ISIS insurgency. The Iraqis have made great gains over the last few years. Now, with the newly formed Government of Iraq, we are continuing to advise, assist, and enable relationship with the mutually-agreed goals of securing Iraq's borders, achieve sovereignty over its territory, economic self-sufficiency, and an independent security apparatus which can protect the people of Iraq.

115. What steps would you recommend for continuing to normalize security assistance to the Iraqi Security Forces in the coming years?

If confirmed, I would assess a number of factors before making a recommendation to support enduring normalized security assistance to the ISF. These factors would include:

- Acknowledging Iraq’s sovereignty and emphasizing the collaborative nature of the partnership.
- Transitioning to less Coalition assistance and increasing the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I) some of the Operation INHERENT RESOLVE advising roles, in addition to the more conventional security cooperation duties such as Foreign Military Sales, bilateral exercises, and International Military Exchange Training programs.
- Full normalization of OSC-I with robust permanent manning and access to stable, reliable funding streams that support long-term U.S. national security interests in Iraq.

Iran

116. What is your assessment of the current military threat posed by Iran?

Iran is the U.S.’s most formidable conventional and unconventional threat in the region. Its primary military capabilities are missiles, naval, and unconventional forces. Iran has developed a growing arsenal of UAS, to include one-way-attack UAVs. Iran has the region’s largest surface-to-surface missile (SSM) arsenal, including both ballistic and cruise missiles and mobile launchers. Some of the SSMs have a range of up to 2,000 kilometers. Iran’s Navy is capable of only a limited menu of operations, but it is the Arabian Gulf’s preeminent naval force and features many small boats and naval mines to complicate adversary freedom of movement in a conflict. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps – Qods Force (IRGC-QF) maintains ties to Shia groups across the region to advance Iran’s interests. Proxies give Iran unconventional options for operations in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and globally. The IRGC-QF also has longstanding bonds with select Sunni groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, and the Taliban. Regular Iranian ground forces continue to focus on internal security and territorial defense, while also deploying limited numbers to Iraq and Syria. Iranian military leaders probably recognize they could not defeat a modern advanced military, but they could impose significant cost.

117. In your opinion, are U.S. military forces and capabilities currently deployed to the Middle East adequate to deter and if necessary, respond to threats posed by Iran?

Through an approach of “integrated deterrence” and growing relations with our allies and partners, the Joint Force maintains a posture adequate to deter and respond to Iranian aggression. Our strength in the region is built on our partnerships, expanding those partnerships, and our ability to move forces rapidly in a time of crisis.

118. If the current situation vis-a-via Iran continues to escalate, what off-ramps exist for “dialing down” the tension, in your view?

The Joint Force is postured to support military options for the President if tension causes an escalation with Iran, however, I defer to Secretary Blinken and the Department of State for any realistic diplomatic off-ramps.

U.S. European Command (EUCOM)

The 2022 NDS highlights the importance of support for “robust deterrence of Russian aggression against vital U.S. national interests, including our treaty Allies.”

119. Is the current posture of U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR sufficient to support the NDS? Please explain your answer.

The U.S. Forces in EUCOM, reinforced by CONUS-based troops and alongside NATO, are prepared to execute NDS objectives and defend the Alliance against Russian aggression, should the situation dictate. However, there is no scenario in which the U.S. would act alone. The situation in Ukraine has been the greatest test of NATO cohesion and the Alliance has shown remarkable unity and resolve, a message that has resonated around the world with friends and adversaries alike.

120. In light of Russia’s unprovoked aggression toward Ukraine, do you assess a need to modify or enhance U.S. posture and investments under the European Deterrence Initiative?

The multi-year investments under European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) to increase our presence, participate in training and exercises, enhance our prepositioned materiel and supporting infrastructure, and build partner capacity have paid dividends toward our readiness, interoperability, and capability to rapidly project power. This was demonstrated at the onset of the conflict in Ukraine when large U.S. formations were able to flow into Europe with ease, draw materiel, and integrate with existing C2 structures alongside the Alliance. I foresee maintaining the pace of this initiative as it alleviates logistical burdens, enhances our responsiveness, and demonstrates our resolve to the Alliance. The most impactful investment of EDI has been the US’ ability to draw from Prepositioned Stock Europe (APS-2) for timely delivery of material security assistance to Ukraine. Future and continued multi-year investments under EDI will ensure the US remains responsive to our own National Security interests and those of our NATO Allies and regional partners.

121. In your assessment, does the United States have sufficient air and missile defense capability and capacity to defend critical infrastructure in EUCOM, such as command and control locations and air bases, against cruise missile attack?

First, the DoD has sufficient air and missile defense capability in the EUCOM AOR. However, in my view, the capacity is lacking in that it is not currently deployed in sufficient numbers to defend EUCOM's critical infrastructure against cruise missile attacks in large salvos. U.S. military capabilities, however, including Integrated Air and Missile Defense have improved in recent years through the European Deterrence Initiative and the Department will continue to invest in capabilities that further increase the survivability and resilience of the joint force and its command-and-control functions in EUCOM.

122. What is your assessment of the deepening relationship between Russia and China, and how, is at all, should we modify our approach to such convergence?

On 4 February 2022, Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin signed a joint statement, declaring their two countries shared a friendship with “no limits.” Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. has observed no discernible change in Beijing and Moscow's strategic partnership even as the international community has united to impose costs on Russia. While China does not openly criticize Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Beijing does openly blame NATO and supports the Russian war effort through economic, diplomatic, public support, and non-lethal military means. We must reinforce the norm against territorial conquest, as a key element of preserving global stability. While the security challenges presented by Russia and China are different, our best defense against a deepening Russia-China relationship is investing in multinational alliances and bilateral relationships with like-minded countries to foster and propagate our shared values and demonstrate the strength of democracies.

NATO Alliance

The 2022 NDS details how we will “collaborate with our NATO Allies and partners to reinforce robust deterrence in the face of Russian aggression.”

123. In your view, how important to U.S. strategic interests is the U.S. commitment to its obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty?

The North Atlantic Treaty is very important to U.S. strategic interests. The U.S. must meet its treaty obligations as agreed upon in the Washington Treaty of 1949 (also called the North Atlantic Treaty). NATO is the strongest alliance in history, and it is as critical to our strategic interests and to ensuring the security of our citizens today as at any time since its founding almost 75 years ago. In the current contested security environment, North American and European Allies must continue to stand as one, a united NATO against the threats we face. Our and our Allies commitment to Article 5 underpins NATO unity. It is the linchpin of deterrence and defense against adversaries threatening the U.S. homeland and our vital interests in Europe. Putin thought he would defeat Ukraine quickly and expected his war would undermine NATO. The opposite occurred. NATO is stronger, more united, and better prepared. NATO’s strength is our mutual trust, commitment, and cohesion to collectively deter threats or respond to attacks. This was reaffirmed at the 2022 Madrid Summit and enshrined in the 2022 (8th) NATO Strategic Concept.

124. What do you view as the essential strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years and what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges in meeting those objectives?

At the 2022 Madrid Summit, the Alliance reaffirmed its essential strategic objectives in its Strategic Concept, agreed upon by Allied leaders. Namely, they reaffirmed NATO's three core tasks: Collective Defense, Cooperative Security, and Crisis Management. I’m

aligned with these objectives and in my view, the greatest challenge the Alliance faces is its ability to adapt and develop, politically and militarily, to meet the challenges of a more unpredictable and competitive world. Our adversaries will test the post-World War II international order attempting to weaken U.S. leadership, divide the Alliance and rewrite international rules and norms to their benefit.

NATO’s nuclear policy states, “The fundamental purpose of NATO’s nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO’s goal is a safer world for all; the Alliance seeks to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons.” This point was most recently reaffirmed within the alliance’s 2022 Strategic Concept, adopted at the Madrid Summit.

125. Do you endorse the goals of the NATO nuclear policy? In your view, should NATO remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist?

Yes. NATO’s nuclear capabilities date to the founding of the Alliance and remain the core of the Alliance’s deterrence and defense policy and strategy today.

126. Do you believe that the forward deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is an essential component of NATO’s nuclear posture?

Yes. As long as NATO is committed to remaining a nuclear alliance, it is important for the U.S. to maintain nuclear weapons forward deployed in NATO countries. These forward-based weapons contribute to U.S. extended deterrence, enhance assurance of our NATO Allies, and demonstrate Allies’ willingness to share defense burdens.

Ukraine

127. What is your assessment of the key lessons learned from U.S. engagement with and support for Ukraine dating back to 2014? Are there particular elements that you believe will be critical for DOD to institutionalize so we are able to replicate successes and avoid potential missteps?

Russia’s war on Ukraine has shown the criticality of alliances and partnerships, both within Europe and globally. Investing in alliance and partnerships now pays dividends when events call for a coordinated, international response, to address violation of national sovereignty in violation of the United Nations Charter, as Russia has in Ukraine. We must continue to work with allies and partners to deepen and strengthen our cooperation, which we have always done in areas of mutual interest and in a spirit of mutual respect.

The NDS highlights the need to develop defensive anti-access, area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the European AOR.

128. In your assessment, does the DOD currently have a mature joint concept of operations and the necessary capabilities in sufficient capacity to mitigate the challenge of Russian A2/AD capabilities? JS

Yes, the U.S., working with our allies and partners, maintains the most effective fighting force in the world, and we are prepared to achieve our national security objectives against any adversary, though not without risks. To maintain the necessary capabilities in sufficient capacity, we must continue to assess the threat posed by Russia, continue to update NATO defense plans, and continue to modernize force structure across the alliance.

129. If not, what additional capabilities or capacity are required in Europe to ensure U.S. forces are able to defend against Russian capabilities and achieve operational freedom of maneuver at decisive points? JS

We continually assess our global force posture to ensure we have appropriate capabilities in place to address the current and projected situation. I believe the systems and processes we have in place are ensuring our force posture in Europe is sufficient to achieve our current national and alliance security objectives in the theater.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM)

China

The 2022 NDS describes the People's Republic of China (PRC) as "the most comprehensive and serious challenge to U.S. national security" and states "The PRC seeks to undermine U.S. alliances and security partnership in the Indo-Pacific region, and leverage its growing capabilities, including its economic influence and the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) growing strength and military footprint, to coerce its neighbors and threaten their interest."

130. Is the current posture of U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific region sufficient to support the NDS? Please explain your answer.

The Joint Force is modernizing its Indo-Pacific posture to support the NDS. This includes the establishment of 5th Generation fighter squadrons, the stationing of a Marine Littoral Regiment in Okinawa, rotational US Army Multi-Domain Task Forces, and other initiatives.

131. In your assessment, what are the priority investments DOD could make that would implement the NDS and improve the military balance in the Indo-Pacific?

The Department works closely with INDOPACOM and our allies and partners in the region to ensure we are making investments that advance NDS priorities, close Combatant Commanders priority gaps, and improve integrated deterrence efforts across the AOR. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to advance investments that improve the

Pacific Deterrence Initiative and address priorities discussed in INDOPACOMs required NDAA reports to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

132. What are the key areas in which each Military Service must improve to provide the necessary capabilities and capacity to the Joint Force to prevail in a potential conflict with China?

The Joint Staff is leveraging and implementing the Joint Warfighting Concept that builds upon emerging concepts of each Service to address potential future conflict with China. These ideas and methods are a roadmap for U.S. Forces, empowering us to shape and prepare the Joint Force for the changing character of war. If confirmed, I intend to work with the Service Chiefs to continue these efforts and will keep the committee apprised.

133. What is your view of the purpose and relative importance of sustained U.S. military-to-military relations with China?

Our military-to-military relationships around the world are centered on reducing risk and preventing crises. Military-to-military engagements with China are designed to maintain peace and stability in the region. When China and the PLA operate in a manner consistent with international norms and standards, the risk of miscalculation and misunderstanding is reduced. With this in mind, bilateral military engagements with China should resume and include high level visits, policy dialogues, and functional exchanges centered on reinforcing the procedures necessary to reduce risk and prevent and manage crises.

134. Should the United States revisit or change its “one China” policy, in your view?

The U.S. “One China” Policy based on the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), Three U.S.-China Joint Communiques, and Six Assurances to Taiwan has maintained cross-strait peace, stability, and deterrence for over fifty years. I share the commitment of leaders within this administration to sustaining this long-standing, effective policy.

135. In your view, how should U.S. joint concepts of operations, force posture, and investments adapt to address China’s military modernization?

We can adapt joint concepts and force posture by enhancing interoperability among branches of the military and with regional allies and partners to bolster deterrence capabilities. Additionally, we should focus investments on advanced technologies, such as cyber defense, space-based assets, and unmanned systems, that can help maintain a competitive edge. Carefully assessing force posture in the Indo-Pacific region and ensuring appropriate presence can deter aggression while maintaining stability.

136. What should the United States do, both unilaterally, and in coordination with allies and partners, to counter the increasing challenge posed by China in the South China and East China Seas?

To counter the challenge posed by China, the United States must continue to participate in developing the economies, governance, and security of allies and partners in the region. In turn, as part of the whole of government effort, the Joint Force continues to support and develop the capabilities and capacity of our allies and partners through foreign military sales such as the Advanced Capabilities Program to support South China Seas claimant nations acquisition of asymmetric capabilities to monitor and defend their Exclusive Economic Zones and counter grey zone activities. Additionally, the Joint Force builds partner interoperability through multilateral and bilateral exercises such as SUPER GARUDA SHIELD, BALIKATAN, and KEEN SWORD.

137. What is your current assessment of the risk of a critical logistics failure in any conflict with China?

Any conflict with China poses formidable challenges to the joint logistics enterprise. Joint Force leadership understands that a critical logistics failure could lead to the failure of the United States to achieve its national security objectives and they are actively working to mitigate this risk. If confirmed, I will continue our Department's efforts to ensure that logistics challenges inherent to any conflict with China are addressed in operational concept development, access, basing and overflight efforts, and resourcing.

138. What is your assessment of China's increasing military presence overseas, including its base in Djibouti and other infrastructure projects across the Indian Ocean?

China is a strategic competitor that uses economic and security outreach in return for access to strategic locations, natural resources, and markets. Over the past decade, China has injected considerable financing across the Indian Ocean region, offering significant loans to strategically located countries such as Djibouti and Sri Lanka. Chinese interests include expanded access to Africa's mineral and other natural resources, opening markets, and naval facilities, any of which places U.S. influence and access to the region at risk. China's first overseas naval base in Djibouti near a strategic maritime chokepoint, for example, poses challenges for all international partners.

The ability of U.S. ground forces to hold at risk adversary ships and aircraft; intercept missiles aimed at our ships, airfields, ports and other fixed facilities; and provide electronic warfare and communications support for our air and naval forces could enable the United States to present adversaries with our own "anti-access/area denial" (A2/AD) challenge.

139. What should be the role of ground forces in creating an A2/AD challenge for adversaries within the First Island Chain in the Indo-Pacific? What specifically should be the role of the Army?

Multi-Domain Operations require ground forces to contribute to the Joint Force's penetration and disintegration of adversary A2/AD systems. The Army has, and should

continue to maintain critical roles in intelligence, cyber, space, electromagnetic warfare, long range fires, protection, vertical lift, and air and missile defense to help the Joint Force defeat adversary standoff by leveraging its Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTF).

140. Do you believe the current ground force posture in INDOPACOM is adequate? If not, what would you recommend to bolster it?

I believe our joint force posture planning in the Indo-Pacific is sufficient to deter aggression, maintain peace and security, ensure a rules-based international order, and enable our ability to rapidly respond to regional contingencies and crises. However, we must maintain pace as the regional security landscape evolves and strategic competition intensifies. If confirmed, I will assess and continue efforts with allies and partners to modernize agreements to improve the Joint Force posture and access regarding Australia, the Philippines, and Japan.

141. Do you support the Defense Posture Realignment Initiative (DPRI), including the realignment of some U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam and the build-up of facilities at other locations?

The governments of the United States and Japan have discussed and aligned their respective defense strategies through various venues to respond to the increasingly severe security environment. To respond to this situation and strengthen the positioning of the U.S. forces in Japan, the governments of the United States and Japan agreed to make necessary force posture adjustments during this past January's 2+2 Ministerial meeting, which upheld the main tenets of the 2012 realignment plan. If confirmed, I will take the required steps to support these force posture initiatives, in alignment with the 2012 plan, that will strengthen U.S. force posture in Japan by making it more versatile, resilient, and mobile.

142. What are the strategic implications of China's rapid modernization and expansion of its nuclear arsenal, and what approach should the United States take to address those implications, in your view?

Given China's nuclear trajectory, we will soon find ourselves faced with two nuclear peer adversaries. We must begin preparing for this challenge now. To do so, I believe we must continue executing our current nuclear modernization programs, evaluate sufficiency of current programs of record to fill any potential deterrence gaps, and engage China in discussions on strategic stability issues and arms control.

143. In your view, with the rapid development in both quantity and quality of Chinese nuclear capabilities, does U.S. nuclear posture, and nuclear doctrine, need to change from its current construct based on a single near-peer nuclear strategic competitor to a new framework based on two near-peer nuclear strategic competitors? If so, how?

I believe our strategy must be prepared to evolve with the changing threat environment. If confirmed, I will work with key stakeholders to assess any changes required

to our nuclear doctrine and posture to account for the changing threat environment.

144. As Chinese aggression and nuclear capabilities both increase, do you assess that we have adequate military and national security crisis communication channels with senior Chinese leadership to avoid or at least mitigate the threat of rapid strategic escalation?

DoD's defense contacts and exchanges with the PRC prioritize crisis prevention and management, risk reduction, and limited cooperation in areas where national interests align to advance a constructive, stable, results-oriented defense relationship with the PLA. Our competitive relationship with the PRC requires we maintain regular communication channels to prevent crisis and establish pathways for timely communications now so we can communicate with the PLA should a crisis occur. Attempting to establish those pathways once a crisis begins is too late. I support increased dialogue that enables us to challenge PRC behaviors that are inconsistent with the free and open international order, gain insight into China's strategic intent, manage differences, and cooperate in areas where national interests align.

Taiwan

145. How do you assess the current cross-strait relationship between China and Taiwan, and how can the U.S. help prevent miscalculation on either side?

I'll echo the statements of senior leaders across the Department and administration: deterrence across the Taiwan Strait is real and strong. The most important thing we can do to sustain the status quo is to remain committed to our long-standing, effective policy on Taiwan.

146. How do you assess the current military balance across the Taiwan Strait?

As indicated in our annual China Military Power Report (CMPR), China has been modernizing its military capabilities and investing in advanced weapons systems. These include aircraft carriers, anti-ship missiles, submarines, ballistic missiles, and cyber capabilities. The PLA has the ability to project power throughout the region and conduct operations near and around Taiwan. Taiwan's military capability and capacity, although growing, is much smaller in comparison to China's military.

147. What do you believe should be the priorities for U.S. military assistance to Taiwan?

Pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act and the 2023 Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act (TERA), the United States has multiple authorities to provide Taiwan with the defense articles and services necessary to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability. Priorities include providing Taiwan with the arms necessary to defend itself via foreign military sales and foreign military financing, as well as non-materiel support, to include capacity building, international military education and training and security cooperation. The Department has

established a Senior Integration Group to find ways to accelerate capability delivery to Taiwan in line with our longstanding policy and commitments.

148. Do you think Taiwan is making appropriate investments in its defensive capabilities and if not, what changes would you recommend?

The Department remains focused on Taiwan's acquisition and integration of asymmetric capabilities and warfighting concepts, commensurate with our understanding of the PRC threat. Taiwan understands the PRC threat and is committed to improving its ability to defend itself. It has increased its defense budget and implemented significant defense reforms, including acquisition of necessary asymmetric capabilities.

149. Some have argued that the United States should explicitly state that we would respond militarily to any Chinese use of force against Taiwan as a means to deter such actions. In your view, what would be the benefits and risks of such a policy change?

Under our One China Policy, we oppose any unilateral attempts to change the cross-Strait status quo by either side, and we expect cross-Strait differences to be resolved by peaceful means. We do not seek conflict with the PRC and are committed to maintaining open lines of communications to responsibly manage our competition under the One China Policy and in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act.

Japan

150. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with Japan?

The U.S.-Japan Alliance is the cornerstone of our Indo-Pacific Security Strategy. It facilitates forward basing of our most advanced military formations and capabilities. This year is an inflection point as our national security and defense strategies are more closely aligned than ever before. With our shared goal of a new era of alliance modernization, I strongly support Japan's updated national security policies including decisions to increase defense spending and acquiring counterstrike capabilities.

In late 2022, Japan signaled a significant change in its defense posture with the release of a new National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and the Defense Buildup Program.

151. In your view, how can the United States best support Japan's defense transformation in line with its strategic documents?

There is important alignment between Japan's National Defense Strategy and the vision and priorities outlined in the U.S. National Defense Strategy, both of which underpin continuing bilateral efforts to modernize the Alliance, bolster integrated deterrence through

an adjusted posture laydown in Japan, and address evolving regional and global security challenges through cooperation with likeminded allies and partners.

Republic of Korea

152. How would you describe the value to U.S. national security interests of the U.S. - Republic of Korea alliance?

For nearly 70 years, the U.S.-ROK Alliance has been a core pillar of the U.S national security architecture in Northeast Asia. The Alliance has successfully deterred the DPRK from large-scale conflict since 1953 and plays an integral role in managing regional security dynamics between South Korea, Japan, and China. The U.S.–ROK Alliance has also strengthened our collective security, economic ties, and societal relationships. Considering the unprecedented number of DPRK provocative ballistic missile launches in 2022 and 2023, the Alliance is even more critical to our national security interests.

153. Do you believe the transfer of wartime operational control from the U.S. to the Republic of Korea should be conditions-based? If so, and if confirmed, what conditions would you recommend that the Secretary of Defense delineate as the threshold for transfer of control?

Yes, the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) should be condition-based. The United States and the ROK already have a plan in place that serves as the roadmap for OPCON transition. This conditioned-based plan ensures that prior to official transfer, the ROK has the required capabilities, and that the security environment is also conducive for the ROK to assume the lead of the U.S-ROK combined command. If confirmed, I will review the conditions outlined within the existing plan before making any recommendations.

154. In your view, are there additional steps that DOD could take to improve U.S. and allied defenses against North Korea's missile capabilities, including through trilateral cooperation between the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan?

The United States, allies, and partners are currently well postured and ready to respond to DPRK threats. We are, however, working on strengthening trilateral cooperation between the United States, Japan, and Republic of Korea to better deal with the challenges posed by North Korea's growing nuclear weapons and missile programs. We are working on greater trilateral cooperation in the areas of integrated air and missile defense, intelligence sharing, joint training and exercises, and technology cooperation including cybersecurity, and electronic warfare. We are also pursuing initiatives that seek to build greater integration among regional partners in addition to trilateral cooperation.

Australia

155. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with Australia?

Australia and the United States have over 100 years of “mateship” and have been Allies for over 70 years. Australia is the Indo-Pacific “Fight Tonight” ally that provides significant defense integration for the United States. Expansion of U.S.-Australia force posture initiatives in the areas of air, land, maritime, and logistics enables exercises, activities, and further opportunities for regional engagement, including for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief response efforts. Australia clearly identifies the Alliance with the United States as its “single most important relationship.” U.S. Force Posture in Australia, combined development of defense industry, logistics, and manufacturing, and improvements in information and technology sharing are all signs of the unwavering U.S.-Australia Alliance.

In 2021, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) partnership with the objective of helping Australia to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and increasing collaboration on a range of advanced technology initiatives.

156. What are your views of the AUKUS partnership?

The historic AUKUS partnership announced on September 15, 2021, breaks new ground by bringing together three highly capable allies to take on the evolving current and future security challenges and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region. This partnership will enhance our combined military capabilities, strengthen deterrence, and forge a more stable balance of power in the region for generations to come. AUKUS elevates all three nations’ industrial capacity to produce and sustain interoperable nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines and advanced capabilities and contributes to global security and stability in our priority theater, the Indo-Pacific.

157. In your view, are there improvements, clarifications, or enhancements that need to be made to effectively implement the AUKUS partnership as intended?

AUKUS requires robust, novel information sharing and technology cooperation among the three allies. For AUKUS to succeed as intended, we must reform prohibitive policies and our approach to defense and military technology exports to improve the FMS process. In working with the State Department and other interagency partners, the DoD supports drafting new legislation to streamline export controls for AUKUS project areas and related bilateral defense trade. The most effective method for DoD to increase information sharing and technology cooperation is pre-approval in the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) for our closest and most capable allies. This legislation will help build expeditiously the capacity of the Australian submarine industrial base and advanced capabilities of the three nations.

The Philippines

158. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with the Philippines?

The Philippine-U.S. Alliance remains ironclad and has stood the test of time of over 70 years since our 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty. Our military-to-military relationship remains a key pillar of this alliance, and under the 2014 U.S.-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) our combined training, exercises, and interoperability between our forces is making our alliance stronger and more resilient and will accelerate modernization goals of our combined military capabilities. The announcement of four new EDCA locations shows recent progression in our bilateral defense relationship.

India

159. What is your assessment of our military-to-military relationship with India?

India is a strategic partner to the United States. Our military-to-military relationship is robust and increasing in scope and sophistication. If confirmed, my strategy would be to continue to bolster the Major Defense Partnership with India by expanding our existing bilateral military-to-military dialogues and defense industrial and technology cooperation.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or “Quad” between the United States, Japan, India, and Australia is designed to uphold the international rules-based order, ensure freedom of navigation, promote democratic values, improve information sharing, and enhance technological collaboration.

160. What are your views on the Quad and, in your view, how can it be more effectively utilized as a multilateral platform for addressing challenges in the Indo-Pacific region?

The Quad has emerged as a significant forum for mobilizing a collective commitment to peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific among like-minded partners. Members are increasingly willing to address security challenges, especially in the maritime domain. The Quad offers a platform to ensure Maritime Domain Awareness, transparency, and resilience across the greater Indo-Pacific. Quad member states, while increasing cooperation amongst themselves, bring significant benefit to non-member countries.

U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM)

161. What threat, if any, do Russian and Chinese activities in the Arctic pose to U.S. interests?

Both Russia and China have increased their desires to exploit the opportunities of the Arctic. Russia has very clearly stated its claims over the Arctic region, to include the right to regulate Arctic waters, exceeding the authority permitted under international law, with the intent to enforce this through military power. The PRC does not yet have an ability to project

significant military power into the Arctic, but seeks to increase its influence there through an expanded slate of economic, diplomatic, scientific, and military activities, including its “Polar Silk Road”, with goals of constructing research facilities, and ensuring its access to new sea lanes and natural resources. Over the last decade, the PRC has doubled its investments, focusing on critical mineral extraction, and expanding scientific activities to conduct dual-use research with intelligence or military applications in the Arctic.

Defense of the Homeland

162. What measures should be taken to ensure the integrity of U.S. airspace against incursion by foreign powers?

The United States must continue to invest in the sensor architecture needed to keep pace with competitors seeking to hold the United States at risk. Our competitors are developing capabilities that can evade the currently employed sensors. Against the continually evolving threat, new sensors, both terrestrial and space-based, are critical to maintaining airspace awareness, enabling effective defense, and ensuring the necessary situational awareness for national leadership. These new sensors, in conjunction with the current expansive network of airspace surveillance systems, will ensure our continued ability to detect threats from the surface to space. We are and will remain postured to respond to threats to the Homeland and must continue to invest in solutions for maintaining the integrity of our airspace.

The 2022 National Defense Strategy lists as one of the Department’s top priorities “Defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by” the People’s Republic of China.

163. In your view, how have the challenges for homeland defense changed as we compete strategically with China and Russia? Does the United States need to adjust its approach to homeland defense to meet these evolving challenges?

The security environment has certainly changed, and the Joint Force is changing with it to defend the homeland against the serious threat posed by the PRC, while continuing to account for the acute threat posed by Russia. The recently released National Defense Strategy reiterated that the Department’s number one priority is homeland defense. The department is now, and will continue to evaluate, how best to protect the homeland through a layered defense, building resilience in our capabilities and force, and building capabilities that enhance deterrence against any adversary’s belief they can achieve their goals by striking the homeland.

Countering Illicit Trafficking by Transnational Criminal Organizations

164. What is your assessment of the threat to U.S. security interests from the illicit trafficking across the U.S.-Mexico border by transnational criminal organizations?

The threat to U.S. National Security posed by illicit trafficking across the U.S.-Mexico border extends beyond traditional challenges and directly impacts public health and safety. Countering illicit drug trafficking is a whole-of-government effort that the Joint Force supports intelligence and with through detection and monitoring in support of interagency and federal law enforcement partners.

165. What recommendations, if any, would you have for strengthening DOD security cooperation with Mexico to address the threat from illicit trafficking by transnational criminal organizations?

Mexico is a vital partner in North America's unified defense approach. The Mexican military prefers to engage with the Joint Force on traditional military missions and not internal security. The Mexican military partners with U.S. Federal law enforcement agencies to counter illicit trafficking inside Mexico. The Joint Force will continue our work and cooperation with Mexico to enhance domain awareness in the common defense of North America.

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)

166. What is your assessment of the nature and importance of security and stability in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR) for U.S. security interests?

Security and stability in the SOUTHCOM AOR directly impact U.S. security interests due to its geographic proximity and close economic, and cultural ties. Importantly, most of our partners and allies in the SOUTHCOM AOR are democracies with shared values on the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and climate. Unfortunately, transnational threats, economic hardship, and malign foreign influence are eroding peace and security, weakening democratic institutions, and creating vacuums of power for malign actors to expand their influence. When our neighbors are suffering from insecurity, repercussions are felt in the United States.

167. What is your assessment of the threat to U.S. security interests from the expanding influence of Russia, China, and their proxies in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

There is no doubt that China is expanding its influence in the SOUTHCOM AOR. While most of the expansion has been economic and trade investment, China is also investing heavily in natural resource exploitation, 5G, energy, space, and critical infrastructure. Military expansion by China in the region has not been pronounced; although, they have increased their security cooperation and military exchanges. Of note, two countries in the region (Honduras and Nicaragua) have switched their diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China in the last two years, with only 6 (of 12 worldwide) regional countries (Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) continuing diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Russia continues to rely on its few allies in the region like Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela for influence and access. Both China and Russia have influential conventional and social media outlets in the AOR which allow them to spread their propaganda effectively to wide audiences. Additionally, if the U.S. is not investing in the region, countries will look for other sources of investment.

168. If confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you have for addressing the growing challenges from Russia, China, and their proxies to security and stability in the Western Hemisphere?

The U.S. must remain the trusted partner in the region. We must acknowledge Western Hemisphere countries' economic situation and not present them with an "either or" scenario. Countries can have constructive relationships with both the United States and China, while we must highlight the known dangers and disadvantages of investing with China. Additionally, if confirmed, I will recommend that the interagency remove bureaucratic and policy roadblocks in order to strengthen existing alliances and partnerships, build new partnerships, and leverage opportunities for international cooperation and education in our hemisphere.

Detainee Treatment and Guantanamo Bay Naval Station

169. Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in Army Field Manual 2-22.3, *Human Intelligence Collector Operations*, issued in September 2006 and DOD Directive 2310.01E, *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, I do support the existing standards and those outlined in the updated DoD Directive 2310.01E, "DoD Detainee Policy," dated March 15, 2022.

170. If confirmed, how would you ensure that DOD detainee operations and interrogations comply strictly with these standards?

If confirmed, I will do my duty to ensure that all DoD policies and plans related to intelligence interrogations, detainee debriefings, and tactical questioning comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual on Interrogations.

171. What concerns do you foresee with meeting the standards of health care for the detainees at the Guantanamo detention facility as that population ages?

I do not have concerns implementing the Secretary of Defense's policy on Medical Support for Detainees as outlined in DoD Instruction 2310.08E, "Medical Program Support for Detainee Operations," Effective: September 5, 2019, Change 1 Effective: August 25, 2021.

Cuba

172. Under what conditions would you recommend the establishment of military-to-military engagement between the United States and Cuba?

Any military engagement with Cuba will be a political decision. The United States seeks a stable, prosperous, and free country for the Cuban people. If confirmed, I will support and provide advice on the United States government pursuit of limited - engagement with Cuba that advances our national interests and empowers the Cuban people while restricting economic practices that disproportionately benefit the Cuban government or its military, intelligence, or security agencies at the expense of the Cuban people.

Venezuela

173. What is your assessment of the current impact of the situation in Venezuela on regional security and stability?

The situation in Venezuela is having a significant negative impact on regional security and stability. Venezuela is in the midst of a humanitarian, political, and economic crisis with food shortages and malnutrition, increasing poverty, widespread power outages, and increasing insecurity. Due to the dire internal situation, millions of Venezuelan citizens have left, with millions of immigrants and refugees stressing the support systems in neighboring countries. Colombia alone has accepted 2.5 million Venezuelan refugees. The vacuum of security created by ineffective governance and corrupt military and police systems has led to an increase in violent crime and transnational criminal organization power and influence, which has also spilled across the Venezuelan borders.

Colombia

174. What is your view of the U.S.-Colombia relationship and the potential for expanding bilateral security cooperation?

Last year, we celebrated 200 years of U.S.-Colombian relations, and I am happy to report that the U.S.-Colombia relationship remains strong. We share many priorities and objectives with the Colombian government, and there is potential for expanding bilateral security cooperation along areas like border security; drug trafficking; peace plan implementation; women, peace, and security; climate change; and democratic institution building.

U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM)

The United States is increasingly dependent on space, both economically and militarily—from the Global Positioning System on which many industrial and military capabilities rely, to the missile warning systems that underpin U.S. nuclear deterrence. Our great power competitors—China and Russia—are engaged in a concerted effort to leap ahead of U.S. technology and impact U.S. freedom of action in the space warfighting domain.

175. In your view, does the 2022 NDS accurately assess the strategic environment as it pertains to the domain of space?

Yes. Intensifying strategic competition presents a serious threat to U.S. national security interests, including in space. We must be prepared to deny a potential adversary the ability to employ space-enabled attack capabilities that can hold our Joint Force at risk.

176. In your view, what will “great power competition” look like in space and to what extent do you view China's and Russia's activities related to the space domain as a threat or challenge to U.S. national security interests?

Russia and China continue to improve their space weapons capabilities and better integrate space, cyberspace, and electronic warfare into both offensive and defensive military operations. They both have counter-space assets on the ground and in orbit today that will continue to be developed, exercised, and integrated into war plans. These increased capabilities will continue to threaten and challenge U.S. national security interests.

177. How would you assess current DOD readiness to implement the 2022 NDS and U.S. strategic objectives as they relate to the domain of space?

DoD is taking significant steps to implement our NDS and national objectives in space. U.S. Space Command is working to sustain our advantages in space, engage with allies and partners, and ensure that space remains a free and open domain.

The Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA established the Space Force as the fifth U.S. military service.

178. In your view, how has integration of space capabilities into joint planning and warfighting changed as a result of the establishment of the Space Force?

Space Force has become a great enabler to our joint planning and warfighting by dramatically improving the integration of space capabilities throughout our processes within DoD and across the Joint Force. Space Force continues to deliver trained space warriors and capabilities to maintain U.S. advantages in space.

179. What is your view of the role, if any, of maintaining space capabilities in the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces to support joint planning and operations?

The Reserve Component is integral to our space operations and joint planning activities. Army National Guard and Air National Guard and Reserve units deliver critical space capabilities to the Joint Force. Assuming the current model continues, this role will only grow as the Space Force matures.

180. In your view, does the Space Force have sufficient readiness reporting practices and systems to support the joint force?

Yes. Space Force adequately maintains the readiness of space capabilities, including personnel and equipment, to allow USSPACECOM in coordination with the other Combatant Commands to plan and execute global space operations, missions, and activities in the space and terrestrial domains which fully support the joint force.

The Chief of Space Operations is responsible for maintaining the readiness of space capabilities, including personnel and equipment, and the Commander, SPACECOM, is responsible for planning and execution of global space operations, missions, and activities in the space and terrestrial domains.

181. What is your assessment of our defensive and offensive space capabilities to protect U.S. and allied space assets and terrestrial operations?

DoD will defend our national security interests from the growing scope and scale of counterspace threats. We will assure critical space-based missions by accelerating the transition to more resilient architectures and by protecting and defending critical systems against counterspace threats; strengthen the ability to detect and attribute hostile acts in, from, and to space; and protect the Joint Force from adversary hostile uses of space.

182. What is your assessment of the current state of training and testing of offensive and defensive space capabilities?

We must build the infrastructure, processes, and procedures to make sure the Joint Force, and especially the U.S. Space Force Guardians have the capabilities they require, whether it's a test and training infrastructure, simulators that can replicate adversary threats, and the interactions you would get with multiple units working together to solve operational challenges.

183. Should there be a conflict in space or a related domain, what are your views on the importance of unity of command as compared to unity of effort between DOD and Intelligence Community assets, both in space on the ground?

The DoD and Intelligence Community each have distinct responsibilities and authorities in space. When it comes to protecting and defending our space capabilities, however, the two organizations must be in lock-step. USSPACECOM is our key element to integrate DoD and IC organization. It serves as the mechanism to provide not only unity of effort for DoD and IC assets in defense of our on-orbit assets, but to serve as a single command charged with the preservation of critical national capabilities with both military and civil objectives while taking advantage of DoD and IC unique authorities.

184. In your view, how could SPACECOM exploit commercial and other less expensive launch options to allow for more rapid replenishment and on-orbit

employment of vital warfighting systems, while minimizing the risk of mission failure?

Operationally responsive replenishment capability is a priority for the Department. The rapid growth of commercial space in cheaper launch and proliferated satellite constellations is very promising. U.S. Space Force, Defense Advanced Research Projects , and a number of defense organizations are working to take advantage of the opportunities we see in the commercial market. If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to ensure that warfighter requirements are met, regardless of the solution.

U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM)

United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) continues to be hobbled by serious readiness shortfalls. This problem is the result of multiple factors, including the demanding technical skills required for key work roles in the Cyber Mission Forces and the lack of prioritization of the cyber mission within the military departments.

185. If confirmed, what actions would you take to address this persistent readiness problem?

I fully support the 2023-2027 DoD Cyber Workforce (CWF) Strategy signed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. Kathleen Hicks, which sets the foundation for how the Department will foster a cyber workforce capable of executing the Department's complex and varied cyber missions. The strategy enables the Department to prioritize retaining highly skilled cyber talent by closing workforce development gaps.

If confirmed, I will support implementation of the CWF Strategy in coordination with the DoD Chief Information Officer (CIO), the Joint Staff, United States Cyber Command, and the Services to focus Department efforts on cyber-related human capital initiatives in support of the 2022 National Defense Strategy. This would include surging capabilities through our reserve components and an initiative to maintain connections with service members and DoD civilians who have separated allowing them to retain their security clearance gain access to additional professional development opportunities. Additionally, I would support USCYBERCOM's execution of its service-like authorities and roles, such as enhanced budgetary control, and acquisition authorities.

186. What are your views on the appropriate model for ensuring that the cyber mission is adequately resourced and prioritized?

The Director of the National Security Agency is "dual-hatted" as the Commander of USCYBERCOM. The administration last year established an independent review of the dual-hat arrangement led by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford. The review found that the dual hat arrangement provided substantial benefits for both organizations and the Nation. I, as the nominee to be the CJCS, believe this arrangement to be an effective model to ensure a high level of collaboration and mutual support between

USCYBERCOM and NSA.

The Director of the National Security Agency is “dual-hatted” as the Commander of USCYBERCOM. The administration last year established an independent review of the dual-hat arrangement led by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford. The review found that the dual hat arrangement provided substantial benefits for both organizations and the Nation.

187. Do you agree with the conclusions of the recent review led by General Dunford on behalf of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence?

Yes. The review’s findings were compelling and clearly articulated the organizational synergies gained and unity of effort granted to the Director of the National Security Agency/Commander USCYBERCOM through the Dual-Hat arrangement. Our experiences since 2018 demonstrated that we can work at the speed or relevance, with informed interagency support, to best serve our national security interests.

The Director of National Intelligence’s annual unclassified threat assessment for Fiscal year 2023 warns that “If Beijing feared that a major conflict with the United States were imminent, it almost certainly would consider undertaking aggressive cyber operations against U.S. homeland critical infrastructure and military assets worldwide. Such a strike would be designed to deter U.S. military action by impeding U.S. decision-making, inducing societal panic, and interfering with the deployment of U.S. forces.” It appears that China is not deterred from conducting widespread cyber attacks on U.S. critical infrastructure and it is unlikely that the National Cyber Mission Force would be able to block such attacks.

188. If direct defense in cyberspace against cyber attacks on U.S. critical infrastructure by a near-peer adversary is unlikely to be successful, how would you propose deterring such attacks if not by threatening some form of in-kind retaliation?

Deterring such attacks relies on the implementation of the National Defense Strategy and the concept of integrated deterrence. If confirmed, I would provide advice on how best to utilize all instruments of national power across all domains and working with allies and partners. While the U.S. is not constrained to answer a cyber-attack with a cyber response, the Department will continue to campaign in and through cyberspace to generate insights about malicious cyber actors, as well as defend forward to disrupt and degrade these actors’ capabilities and supporting ecosystems. Additionally, DoD will work with its interagency partners, leveraging all available authorities to enable the cyber resilience of U.S. critical infrastructure and counter threats to military readiness.

Most activities taking place in the physical world are reflected in the digital domain and

captured in some form. Increasingly, the actions of significant import are not simply reflected in cyberspace but are carried out in and through the cyber domain. Congress remains unsatisfied with DOD's lack of visibility, understanding, and ability to operate effectively in this information environment.

189. Do you think that the Department can plan and conduct effective information operations (IO), intelligence collection, and military cyber operations in the information environment without comprehensive understanding of the cyber-social terrain in key regions of the world?

We acknowledge that understanding the cyber-social terrain in key regions of the world is critical to conducting effective military operations and believe that good understanding requires a whole-of-government approach. While the DoD has unique capabilities in this space, we often collaborate with Department of State, the intelligence community, and other executive branch agencies to develop a holistic understanding of the information environment. If confirmed, I will endeavor to collaborate with our interagency partners to improve the Department's capabilities, work with our intelligence community to develop specific requirements and training to improve intelligence support to operations in the information environment, and continue updates to information forces tactics, techniques, and procedures to take advantage of the latest developments in both academia and private industry.

190. What are your views on how, if confirmed, you could improve the management of the collection and analysis cyber-social terrain data in support of the planning and execution of DOD's IO, intelligence, and cyber operations?

If confirmed, I will work to ensure DoD intelligence and analytic processes are aligned to support the unique requirements of information and cyber operations. The volume of data related to cyber-social terrain is immense and the variables within the data are complex. Necessarily, the DoD analytic community is consistently refining its ability to identify variables of importance to help drive decision-making and allow the Joint Force to be responsive, agile, and effective.

Russia has conducted ambitious and aggressive cyber-enabled information operations against the United States and our European allies aimed at influencing election outcomes, and undermining democracy and collective security. Following the 2016 election, the U.S. election system and networks have been designated as critical infrastructure. Other adversary nations now also pose threats to the integrity of our elections and democracy.

191. General Nakasone, Commander of United States CYBERCOM and Director of the National Security Agency has testified to Congress that election security is a "no fail" enduring mission for both organizations. Do you concur with that judgment?

Yes. Defending the election infrastructure is a whole of government responsibility to include state and local agencies. Each has roles and responsibilities that can enable the protection of technical infrastructure from foreign interference. This is critical to ensuring faith and confidence in the fundamental tools of democracy. The federal government provides support to state governments in fulfilling their elections security responsibilities, as appropriate with applicable law. The DOD and the IC must work with allies and interagency partners to detect and disrupt foreign malign cyber activity.

U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM)

192. In your view, what is the role of TRANSCOM in supporting implementation of the 2022 NDS?

TRANSCOM is the engine that propels the 2022 NDS by ensuring the viability of deterrence options and providing our national leadership with strategic flexibility. TRANSCOM ensures rapid response anywhere in the world by conducting globally integrated mobility operations, leading the Unified Command Plan (UCP)-directed Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise, and providing the enabling capabilities to project and sustain the Joint Force in support of National Objectives. Additionally, TRANSCOM's role as the Bulk Fuel Single Manager will drive global synchronization across the Joint Petroleum Enterprise (JPE) for posture, planning, execution, and capabilities in support of combatant command requirements and national security objectives.

193. What is your understanding of how TRANSCOM balances both organic and privately owned sealift equities to support the NDS?

TRANSCOM leverages the US-owned commercial ocean carrier industry to provide sealift in competition, crisis, and conflict. This capability is augmented by reserve fleets comprised of vessels with secure, encrypted communication and navigation capabilities that are not available in sufficient numbers in the active US-owned commercial industry. The organic sealift fleet can be used to access areas of increased risk that are restricted to contracted commercial vessels. TRANSCOM balances long-term strategic requirements against crisis response using the partnership of organic and contracted sealift to assure strategic power projection.

194. In your view, should there be a central lead or global manager for contested logistics within the department?

As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners.

U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM)

195. In your view, what is the role of U.S. Special Operations Forces in supporting the implementation of the 2022 NDS? J5

SOF campaign globally and across domains to strengthen and sustain deterrence, supporting DoD's integrated deterrence and campaigning activities. SOF operations, activities, and investments can undermine adversary confidence that their aggression will succeed, shaping their decisions, and enhancing deterrence. The access, placement, and influence generated by SOF's long-term commitments to building partner capacity and improving interoperability provide expanded, low-cost options to gain awareness, shape the operating environment, and present adversaries with multiple dilemmas. SOF remain ideally suited to identify a competitor's coercive activities in the "gray zone" and counter them with deliberate, credible options while managing escalation.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (ASD(SOLIC))

Section 922 of the FY 2017 NDAA empowered the ASD(SOLIC) to serve as the "service secretary-like" civilian official with responsibility for the oversight of and advocacy for special operations forces. Among other reforms, the law defined the administrative chain of command for SOCOM as running through the ASD(SOLIC) to the Secretary of Defense for issues impacting the readiness and organization of special operations forces, special operations-peculiar resources and equipment, and civilian personnel management.

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

In my view, civilian oversight and control of the military is critically important to the Department of Defense and our Nation. ASD(SO/LIC) exercises oversight, authority, direction, and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including the readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. The role of ASD(SO/LIC) is important for both SOF oversight and advocacy, and vital for the health and readiness of U.S. special operations forces. If confirmed, I look forward to strengthening this relationship and coordination.

197. What is your understanding of the organizational and administrative relationship between ASD (SO/LIC) and the Commander of SOCOM?

ASD(SO/LIC) is the principal staff assistant and civilian advisor to the USD(P) and the Secretary of Defense on Special Operations and low intensity conflict matters. The principal duty of the ASD(SO/LIC) is the overall oversight of Special Operations activities within the Department of Defense, including USSOCOM. Section 167 of Title 10 places the ASD(SO/LIC) in the administrative chain of command between the Secretary of Defense and the Commander, USSOCOM to exercise authority, direction, and control with respect to the special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including the

readiness and organization of SOF, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. If confirmed, I will work closely with ASD(SO/LIC) to ensure our special operations forces are organized effectively, highly trained, and well-equipped to seize opportunities and address the challenges of any future operational environment.

Section 127e and Section 1202 Activities

Section 127e of title 10, U.S. Code, authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations for the purpose of combatting terrorism. Section 1202 of the NDAA for FY 2018 authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide similar support to forces or individuals supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations.

198. What is your assessment of the national security utility of each of these authorities in the current strategic environment?

I see both authorities maintaining their utility for the foreseeable future. Terrorism and violent extremism remain a persistent threat to U.S. interests and our homeland. A key challenge that we face is striking the right balance with our national security priorities to ensure we don't overcorrect away from counterterrorism and lose the last 20 years of hard-won experience that we've gained. The authority provided by Section 127e is ideal to strike this balance effectively, it allows us to meet our counterterrorism goals of shifting the burden of operations to partners, reducing risk to U.S. persons, all at a sustainable cost that allows the U.S. to concurrently focus on developing new technologies and processes for conventional conflict.

Section 1202 authority funds indirect action against non-terrorist threats, including state actors. It is a highly useful tool for enabling irregular warfare operations in support of the National Defense Strategy emphasis on expanding the competitive space to deter and defeat coercion and aggression by revisionist powers and rogue regimes.

199. If confirmed, what criteria would you apply to the evaluation of proposals for the use of each of these authorities, with a view to mitigating the risks associated with the conduct of counterterrorism and irregular warfare activities below the level of traditional armed conflict?

Section 127e authority, or its predecessor Section 1208, has existed since 2005, and over the years, the Department has developed effective criteria to ensure foreign forces do not conduct escalatory or inappropriate actions. Section 1202, while modeled after the successful Section 127e authority, requires a careful assessment of benefits versus risk with respect to competition against adversaries below the level of armed conflict. Both programs involve comprehensive selection, screening, and vetting procedures for partner forces to ensure compliance with the laws of armed conflict. If confirmed, I will continue the high degree of scrutiny and oversight, in conjunction with the Department, to ensure these

programs advance our aims while reducing risk of compromise or escalation.

200. What is your understanding of the extent to which partner forces nominated to receive support under these authorities are vetted and monitored for human rights concerns, counterintelligence threats, and other potentially derogatory or disqualifying information?

I am committed to upholding the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) and protecting the Nation against threats. While the Leahy laws, Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act and Section 362 of Title 10, do not apply to Section 127e or Section 1202, activities under these programs must comply with the LOAC and are closely monitored. The establishment of a new Section 127e or Section 1202 activity requires a detailed description of the activity including counterintelligence and force-protection screening, as well as a description of the steps taken to ensure that the recipients of support have not engaged in human rights violations.

U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM)

Nuclear Policy

The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirmed long-held American doctrine that includes limiting the use of nuclear weapons to “extreme circumstances” and the need to maintain the nation’s nuclear triad of land-, sea-, and air-based capabilities.

201. How does the 2022 NPR fit within the framework of the 2022 NDS, in your view?

I believe the 2022 NPR appropriately reinforced decades of stability in U.S. nuclear policy even as it seeks to incorporate nuclear deterrence in the broader integrated deterrence framework from the 2022 NDS.

202. What is your understanding of the role of nuclear weapons and the importance of nuclear deterrence to U.S. national security and the defense of allies?

As stated in the 2022 NDS and 2022 NPR, our nuclear mission undergirds and is foundational to all our defense priorities and it remains indispensable to our national security. In a dynamic security environment, a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent is foundational to broader U.S. defense strategy and the extended deterrence commitments we have made to allies and partners.

203. Do you agree with the assessment of the past five Secretaries of Defense that nuclear deterrence is DOD’s highest priority mission and that modernizing our Nation’s nuclear forces is a critical national security priority? Please explain your answer.

Yes. Nuclear weapons pose the only existential military threat to the homeland, and ensuring the U.S. maintains credible and effective nuclear forces is critical to deterring nuclear-armed adversaries. Our ability to execute the nuclear deterrence mission underpins our ability to successfully conduct other DOD operations in support of our national security interests.

204. What are your views on deterrence now that the United States facing the prospect of simultaneously deterring two nuclear-armed peer competitors in Russia and China?

We are facing heightened nuclear competition with Russia and the pace and scope of the PRC's nuclear expansion will present new strategic dilemmas, but I do not believe that fundamentally changes how deterrence works. By maintaining credible and effective U.S. nuclear forces, we seek to deter aggression from both Russia and China.

205. What is your understanding of how Russia and China have expanded and modernized their nuclear force capabilities?

China is rapidly expanding their stockpile of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, while Russia is expending limited resources to modernize their strategic nuclear forces and maintain a large stockpile of tactical systems. While Russia remains the most capable and diverse nuclear rival, China's increasing capability is a growing threat to the U.S. and our allies and partners.

206. In your view, do these capabilities pose an increasing threat to the United States and its allies?

Yes

207. Do you believe Russia has or is willing to employ nuclear coercion as a means of advancing its military and foreign policy goals?

Yes, based on what we've already observed, I believe Russia has already attempted multiple times to coerce Ukraine and U.S. partners and allies into submitting to Putin's objectives. Therefore, we must continue to be prepared to respond to further irresponsible behavior by Russia.

208. Do you agree with DOD's assessment that China intends to double or triple the size of its nuclear arsenal over the next decade?

Yes, over several years, we have seen China make substantial investments in its nuclear arsenal that are expected to significantly expand PRC's nuclear weapons stockpile, their means of delivery, and overall strategic deterrence capabilities. These investments are ongoing, are expected to continue, and are consistent with the PRC's stated goal of improving their forces to that of a "world-class military."

209. Do you believe that as China completes its build out of a triad of delivery platforms it will adhere to the full meaning of “no first use”?

No. China's lack of transparency and refusal to engage in meaningful dialogue while expanding both scale and scope of nuclear forces increases uncertainty over China's intentions.

210. What do you see as the major changes in the threat landscape between the 2010, 2018 and 2022 Nuclear Posture Reviews?

The threat environment has grown increasingly complex since 2010, and even since 2018. I believe China's rapid military expansion and modernization, to include its nuclear forces, represents the most significant change in the threat landscape since the 2018 NPR.

211. Do you support the U.S. nuclear force structure recommended by the 2022 NPR? If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to that force structure?

Yes. The 2022 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) affirmed the U.S. commitment to full-scope modernization of our nuclear forces, including all three legs of the U.S. strategic triad, dual-capable fighter aircraft, and nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems. If confirmed, I will examine whether additional options for the President are warranted to address any exploitable “gap(s)” in our deterrence capabilities.

212. Do you believe U.S. extended nuclear deterrence assurances are effective in reassuring allies that they do not need to pursue their own nuclear arsenals to ensure their national security?

Yes. We recognize growing concerns about nuclear and missile developments in the PRC, North Korea, and Russia, and are committed to strengthening deterrence in ways that are responsive to changes in the regional security environment. Toward that end, we will work with allies and partners to ensure an effective mix of capabilities, concepts, deployments, exercises, and tailored options to deter and, if necessary, respond to coercion and aggression.

213. Do you believe that the risk of nuclear proliferation will increase if U.S. allies lose confidence in our extended nuclear deterrence assurances?

Yes

214. What is your understanding of the state of U.S. nuclear forces, its global nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) architecture, and the supporting weapons sustainment and production capabilities within the National Nuclear Security Administration?

Although our nuclear forces and existing NC3 architecture are safe, secure, and effective, we have greatly exceeded their intended design life, and they are showing their age. Deferred modernization has removed margin and there is no longer room for delay. This is further challenged by atrophy in both the DoD industrial base for nuclear delivery platforms and NNSA production capabilities and infrastructure, some of which date back to the Manhattan Project.

215. Do you agree that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex is a critical national security priority?

Yes. Maintaining the nuclear triad is of vital national importance to deter adversaries, assure allies and, if necessary, achieve military objectives. However, the delivery platforms and nuclear warheads of each leg of the nuclear triad are near end-of-life and require replacement with modern capabilities. Fielding modern nuclear weapons requires the recapitalization of the DOE/NNSA nuclear weapons production infrastructure that was largely abandoned and at has largely atrophied since the end of the Cold War.

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

The existing nuclear force was designed in the last decades of the Cold War when the U.S. faced a very different threat environment. While the current program of record is sufficient to modernize the existing nuclear force, that plan is increasingly challenged to succeed in a timely manner. If confirmed, I intend to consult key stakeholders to understand whether we should pursue additional capabilities for our nuclear forces and enterprise.

217. The previous Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the current Vice Chairman, the Chief of Naval Operations, and several Combatant Commanders have stated that they support the continued development of a nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile as a means of addressing Russia's advantages in theater-range nuclear weapons, managing escalation in a potential conflict with China, and enhancing assurance to U.S. allies. Do you agree with these views?

I believe we must maintain a range of strategic military options and capabilities to present to the President. If confirmed, I will be able to more fully review how we can continuously improve our ability to deter and, if deterrence fails, restore deterrence, against our nuclear adversaries. I am aware of differing perspectives regarding the nuclear armed sea launched cruise missile. If confirmed, I will analyze the arguments for and against this program and will provide my military advice to the Secretary and President.

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

I agree with the 2022 NPR direction for DoD and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA) to develop and implement a risk management strategy to identify, prioritize, and recommend actions across the portfolio of nuclear programs. This is essential for monitoring the overall health of the nuclear deterrent as we sustain current capabilities and transition to modernized systems.

219. Do you believe a nuclear “No First Use” or “Sole Purpose” policy would be appropriate for the United States? Please explain your answer.

No. As the 2022 NPR concluded, a No First Use or Sole Purpose policy would result in an unacceptable level of risk in light of the range of non-nuclear capabilities being developed and fielded by competitors that could inflict strategic-level damage to the United States and its Allies and partners.

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

Yes, the rigorous Stockpile Stewardship Program has developed the computational and experimental tools needed to certify the current stockpile without the need for full-scale nuclear weapons testing. However, fielding modern nuclear forces would benefit from enhanced computing and experimental capabilities, including an enduring exascale computing and experimental facilities to certify weapons in hostile environments. Continued support for the National Laboratories is crucial for the viability of the Stockpile Stewardship mission.

221. Do you perceive utility in the work of the Council on Oversight of the National Leadership Command, Control, and Communications System? Please explain your answer. JS

Yes, there is utility in the work of the Council and its various governance forums. The utility lies in unifying efforts across the Department for sustaining and modernizing senior leader, nuclear command and control, and continuity of government communications.

Arms Control

222. What are your views of the New START Treaty, taking into account Russia's recent actions to suspend participation in the Treaty?

To date, New START has contributed to bilateral stability by limiting the offensive strategic arms it addresses. However, New START does not address Russia's large and growing arsenal of non-accountable nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems. In addition, Russia's violations of the New START Treaty, and its claimed suspension of the treaty, greatly undermine the viability of the treaty. Mutual compliance with New START would strengthen the security of the United States, our allies and partners, Russia, and the world.

223. What do you see as the major challenges for negotiating a follow on treaty with Russia, and would you support U.S. participation in such a negotiation?

I support diplomatic efforts that contribute to national security and in particular this effort to pursue arms control agreements capturing the full scope of Russian nuclear capabilities, including their non-strategic nuclear weapons and novel nuclear systems that are not currently the subject of arms control agreement. Any such agreements must be verifiable, enforceable, and enhance the security of our Nation and our allies and partners. Russia's noncompliance with many arms control arrangements – including the New START Treaty, Treaty on Open Skies, and INF Treaty -- casts a shadow over and creates challenges for any potential negotiations that would lead to a follow-on agreement to replace the New START Treaty when it expires in February 2026.

224. What are your views on the asymmetry in the number of non-strategic weapons between Russia and the United States and should they be accounted for in any follow-on treaty?

I am concerned by Russia's approximately 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons that are not numerically constrained by any arms control treaty. They should be accounted for in any follow-on treaty with Russia.

225. What are your views of missile defense and nuclear arms control with either Russia or China?

The increasing capabilities of peer and near-peer nuclear states demonstrates the importance of missile defense and the need for continued investment. As important and if not more so, the United States will continue to rely on strategic deterrence – underwritten by a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal – to address and deter large intercontinental-range, nuclear capable missile threats to the homeland from Russia and China.

226. In your assessment, how would delaying or cancelling current nuclear modernization plans and programs affect our arms control negotiation leverage with near-peer and peer competitors?

Delaying or canceling current nuclear modernization plans and programs on a unilateral basis would reduce our strategic deterrence and arms control leverage with Russia and China.

227. What do you see as the major challenges for any nuclear risk reduction or arms control negotiations with China?

China continues to deny it is conducting a crash nuclear build-up and reject calls for even modest nuclear risk reduction measures. China needs to be more transparent about its nuclear forces. Any such agreement with China must be verifiable, enforceable, and enhance

the security of our Nation and our allies and partners. I expect transparency, verification, and enforcement will be challenges.

Missile Defense

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

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

I agree with and support the 2022 Missile Defense Review's assertion that our missile defense system is designed to deter aggression from rogue states. We rely on a whole-of-government effort to defeat missile technology for all adversaries while raising the threshold of escalation by maintaining a credible kinetic defense. The increasing capabilities of peer and near-peer nuclear states will challenge our limited kinetic missile defenses, however, our nuclear deterrent continues to underpin our missile defense efforts.

229. If confirmed as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, what would be your priorities for U.S. missile defense capabilities for the homeland?

If confirmed, my priorities would be aligned with priorities set by the Missile Defense Review for homeland missile defense. The first priority remains protecting the homeland from an adversary ICBM attack. The Ground-Based Midcourse-Defense system contributes directly to the U.S. deterrence strategies for rogue state ICBM threats to the homeland and would defend against an ICBM attack. Per the NDS, another key priority remains defense of the homeland against cruise missile threats. We must continue to modernize and develop both active and passive defense capabilities that enhance protection of the homeland against cruise missile threats.

230. Do you support a cruise missile defense of the homeland?

Yes. The Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force and NORTHCOM have been working on a comprehensive plan to strengthen our homeland against air and cruise missile threats in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam. We're taking a hard look at the changing threat environment as we transition away from a focus on violent extremists and returning our attention to states with greater reach with advanced missile systems. The Missile Defense Review prioritizes the examination of active and passive defense measures to decrease the risk of any cruise missile strike against critical assets, regardless of origin.

231. Do you believe the U.S. ground-based interceptor fleet is appropriately sized to address potential ICBM threats from North Korea or other rogue nations?

The Joint Requirements Oversight Council and the Missile Defense Executive Board review this requirement every year. Our current fleet of Ground Based Interceptors is adequate against the existing North Korean threat, and our planned upgrade to the Next Generation Interceptor and modest increase to the number of interceptors in the fleet should be sufficient to defeat a limited attack. If confirmed, I will support continuing these annual reviews to assess and required changes in the ground-based interceptor fleet.

232. In your view, do you believe missile defense policy should be limited to countering only rogue nations, such as North Korea and Iran?

I support the Missile Defense Review stipulation that the United States maintains the right to defend itself against attacks from any source, but GMD is neither intended for, nor capable of, defeating large and sophisticated ICBM, air, or sea-launched ballistic missile threats from PRC or Russia. Our strategic deterrence addresses these threats.

233. If so, what role do you believe integrated air and missile defenses should play in defending limited areas and defeating smaller scale cruise or hypersonic glide missile attacks by larger threats, such as Russia and China?

The Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force and NORTHCOM have been working on a comprehensive plan to strengthen our homeland against air and cruise missile threats in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Guam. The Department will continue to develop active and passive defenses against regional hypersonic missile threats and pursue a persistent and resilient sensor network to characterize and track all hypersonic threats, improve attribution, and enable engagement. Integrated air and missile defense of the homeland is vital to our resiliency at home and to our ability to project power abroad in support of allies and partners.

234. Do you support the Next Generation Interceptor?

As North Korean ballistic missile threats to the U.S. homeland continue to evolve, the United States is committed to, and I support improving the capability and reliability of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system. This includes development of the Next Generation Interceptor to augment and eventually replace the existing Ground-Based Interceptors. In addition to the GMD system, the United States will leverage and improve its full spectrum of passive and active missile defeat capabilities, complemented by the credible threat of direct cost imposition through nuclear and non-nuclear means, to continue to counter North Korean missile threats to the homeland.

235. Do you support the Next Generation Interceptor eventually replacing the existing 44 ground-based interceptors?

In support of the homeland missile defense mission, continuous modernization and modest expansion of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system will remain an essential element of our comprehensive missile defeat approach. I support replacing the existing Ground-based Interceptors with Next-Generation Interceptors, expanding the arsenal of interceptors, and leveraging the full spectrum of current and emerging missile defeat capabilities supports this approach and hedges against future uncertainty in missile threats against the homeland.

236. What are your views on the advisability of building a second homeland missile defense site on the eastern coast of the United States?

Currently, the Ground-based Missile Defense (GMD) sites in Alaska and California provide protection of all the United States against both North Korean and any future Iranian intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threats. This protection will be strengthened as the Next Generation Interceptor comes online later this decade. At this time, there is no operational requirement for a strategic missile defense site on the eastern coast. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor advances in adversary capabilities, and if necessary, will assess the feasibility of enhancing our protection to ensure our defenses remain strategically worthwhile.

237. What is your understanding of U.S. capabilities for defending against maneuvering hypersonic glide vehicles?

Maneuvering missiles, such as hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV), present a challenge to existing defensive systems because they can travel on unpredictable flight paths at low altitudes making them difficult to track using standard terrestrial radar systems. If confirmed, I will continue to seek out asymmetric means of defeating hypersonic threats to create cost imposition within the framework of integrated deterrence.

238. Recently, the Missile Defense Agency indicated that the Glide Phase Interceptor program for hypersonic defense would not reach initial operational capability until after 2035. Do you believe this timeline is sufficient to meet current and anticipated hypersonic threats?

The United States would always prefer capabilities delivered sooner rather than later. I will ensure we work closely with MDA and other stakeholders to prioritize and continually look to create efficiencies within these efforts. I appreciate the GAO report from June of 2023 that examines counter-hypersonic capabilities such as the Glide Phase Interceptor and the Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor. Hypersonic glide vehicles delivered by missile boosters are an emerging and existing threat that pose new challenges to missile defense systems. Consequently, the continued investment in development of long range and resilient sensor technologies and capabilities, to include those that could support a space sensor network, is essential for tracking and engaging advanced missile threats. When mature, intercepting in the glide phase would become part of the overall Department strategy for hypersonic defeat; however, we will continue to seek many types of detect, track, and

defeat solutions, to include terminal solutions, active and passive solutions, kinetic and non-kinetic solutions.

239. Do you support a space-based sensor layer for improved tracking and targeting of advanced threats such as hypersonic missiles?

Yes, space-based sensors can monitor, detect, and track missile launches from locations almost anywhere on the globe unimpeded by the constraints that geographic limitations impose on terrestrial sensors. Active U.S. missile defense will require advanced technologies to provide greater efficiencies for U.S. active missile defense capabilities, to include space-based sensors and boost-phase defense capabilities. The exploitation of space provides a missile defense posture that is more effective, resilient, and adaptable.

240. What are your views on the efficacy of boost-phase intercept and space-based intercept or directed energy programs?

I assess that the efficacy of boost-phase intercept, space-based intercept and directed energy programs is still an open question. While these concepts have great potential, the Department is exploring how to best resolve the challenges associated with developing and fielding these capabilities. For example, prototype directed energy weapons are, or are in the process of, being tested and fielded against small Uncrewed Aerial Systems (sUAS) and on an experimental basis for defense against cruise missiles, although the systems are neither space-based nor for boost-phase intercept. There will be challenges in creating these programs on the scale to provide robust coverage of threat areas, and if confirmed I will remain involved in operational discussions with senior Department leadership to ensure a thorough examination of these concepts.

241. Has DOD developed and implemented operational concepts, plans, and policies appropriate to the governance and utilization of such programs? What would you do to address this issue, if confirmed?

In line with the Joint Warfighting Concept, the DoD continues to evolve with the threats that our homeland and warfighters face every day. To that end, the DoD must continue to parallel assessments and updates of our acquisition and development processes with employment and governance policies to ensure our warfighters retain the strategic and tactical competitive advantage. If confirmed, I will remain involved in operational discussions with senior Department leadership to ensure a thorough examination of these materiel concepts and their governance processes.

242. The United States is currently developing a missile defense architecture to better support the protection of U.S. citizens and forces on Guam. What is your understanding of the status of this effort, and its operational importance to the U.S. in the Western Pacific?

As part of the United States Homeland, the protection of Guam is critical to the U.S. National Defense Strategy, and the Department has been focused on this subject and it is a

Department priority. IAMD of Guam has been designated as a Joint Special Interest Acquisition Category (ACAT) ID Program.

Electronic Warfare and Spectrum Operations

243. How capable do you believe Russia and China to be in electronic warfare?

Russia recognizes electronic warfare is a critical capability with great significance on the battlefield. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, there were indications that Moscow was expanding their strategic and operation echelon capabilities, fielding new EW systems, and ensuring these were integrated with their ground forces at multiple command levels. These assets are intended to disrupt US/NATO's ability to conduct ISR, communicate, and exercise command and control. Western forces operating in the vicinity of Russian forces should anticipate electromagnetic interference.

China anticipates EW will be a critical capability in any future conflict. The importance of this capability is highlighted by Beijing's 2015 military re-organization that resulted in the creation of the Strategic Support Force (SSF). The SSF is directly subordinate to the Central Military Commission and is tasked with providing EW, cyber, and space capabilities in support of military operations. EW elements are also integrated at Theater operational levels with each of the subordinate service elements.

244. Has DOD adequately integrated electronic warfare into its joint concepts and operational plans?

This is a work in progress, and the biggest block to doing this is a mindset shift. Often we think of electromagnetic warfare as a supporting effort to enable some other weapon system or capability. In modern warfare, electromagnetic warfare may be the main effort to achieve the desired strategic effects, especially in the pre-conflict phase where we ideally deter a fight from happening in the first place. Our joint concepts and operational plans are progressing towards this reality, but I think we have room for improvement.

245. What major issues attend the United States' conduct of joint electronic warfare operations, especially at the relevant combatant commands?

Electromagnetic warfare operations are dynamic. U.S., allied, partner, and adversary capabilities in the electromagnetic maneuver space are constantly changing, which creates perpetual challenges to get the right capability to the right warfighter at the right time to be operationally relevant against the right threat.

246. Do you support a Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center at U.S. Strategic Command?

Yes. U.S. Strategic Command is the operational lead for electromagnetic spectrum

operations across the Joint Force. The Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations Center will increase the command's capabilities in this role.

247. Does the DOD adequately conduct joint Tier One exercises utilizing adversary level electronic warfare?

No. Our Combatant Commanders recognize the critical importance of electronic warfare and prioritize the objectives of their Tier One exercises accordingly, tailored to the threats within their geographic or functional areas of responsibility, but frequently the objectives of the exercise and limited threat replication capabilities overcome the realism of the exercise. Electronic warfare continues to evolve rapidly, and we must forecast and preemptively update our training to remain dominant. Our Joint Warfighting Concept emphasizes the importance of the electromagnetic spectrum and provides a unified approach to shape joint force exercises. A live, virtual, constructive (LVC) simulation environment will be essential in this effort. If confirmed, I will ensure the Joint Staff issues guidance on the realism of the training events.

248. What is your opinion of training ranges for electronic warfare?

Current training ranges need to evolve to capture the evolving warfighting environment. Investments have been made through Service live, virtual, constructive (LVC) test and training programs that can enable a more robust and realistic threat battlespace environment. Continued investment is necessary to ensure live ranges can meet and exceed requirements for the high-end fight in the future.

249. Do you believe our systems are adequately protected from adversary electronic attack?

It depends on the adversary, but against our most advanced adversaries, the Joint Force would likely face challenges protecting itself from electromagnetic attack. There are two factors that contribute to these challenges. Over the past few decades, the Joint Force has lost some muscle memory defending against electromagnetic attack by conducting operations within a permissive electromagnetic spectrum. Over the same period, operations within this spectrum have changed significantly while our most advanced adversaries have done their best to rapidly evolve. If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring that we continue to invest in additional capabilities in the electromagnetic spectrum.

250. Does DOD have adequate simulation capability to experiment with and test joint electronic warfare concepts, in your view?

No. Based on identified gaps in simulation capabilities we are modernizing training infrastructure to include joint live, virtual, and constructive capabilities that provide space,

terrestrial, and cyber-based electronic warfare simulation for use in Joint experimentation, testing, and training.

251. Spectrum is a vital asset in the conduct of electronic warfare – what is your opinion on the DOD use of the S band for spectrum operations and potential impacts on its loss – please be specific in citing examples.

Spectrum is a vital asset in the conduct of electronic warfare – I recognize that spectrum is a precious resource and that our national economic prosperity and position as a global leader in technology innovation has vital dependencies, however, we must ensure, first and foremost, that we preserve and protect our vital National Security and operational readiness equities.

Proposals for DoD to share or vacate the S band may result in setting the DoD back several decades compared to near peer adversary nations and result in significant financial costs. Vacating this band is not an option, and no decision should be made prior to the current study is completed and reviewed. I and the Joint Chiefs of Staff appreciate deliberate efforts to preserve and develop spectrum as a vital national resource and look forward to helping ensure that we are mindful of the national security implications and unique Joint Force operational requirements are clearly understood and preserved.

Security Cooperation and Arms Transfers

252. If confirmed, what steps would you recommend, if any, to ensure that the Department of Defense is taking a strategic approach to its security cooperation with allies and partners?

The Joint Force executes the NDS which is strategically focused on security cooperation with allies and partners. Through the Combatant Command activities with allies and partners, we will build, and exercise force elements needed in crisis, conflict, or stabilization, such as infrastructure, logistics, command and control, dispersal and relocation, information sharing, and mobilization. If confirmed, I will ensure security cooperation activities remain foundational to U.S. national security interests and to our collective ability to maintain access and address the challenges we will face globally.

253. What is your understanding of DOD’s role in the foreign military sales and arms transfer process? In your view, what are the greatest challenges for DOD in fulfilling this role in a timely and effective manner?

The role of DoD in Foreign Military Sales is to effectively execute the FMS programs in coordination with Department of State, the Defense Industry and other government agencies. There are many challenges in executing an FMS case from inception to construction, through initial delivery, training and then maintenance and support. Last year the Department conducted an extensive review of FMS processes, policies, and practices to

identify potential improvement to the system. That review produced tangible recommendations to improve the speed and transparency of the system and reduce burdens. Further the DoD is committed to continuous improvement of the FMS process and has established a Continuous Process Improvement Board to monitor the implementation of these recommendations. I support the Secretary of Defense initiative to continually improve FMS.

254. Is DOD appropriately organized, trained, and resourced to execute security cooperation and foreign military sales effectively? If not, and if confirmed, what changes to defense security assistance organizations, training, and processes would you recommend?

The DoD is appropriately organized and trained to execute security cooperation and foreign military sales effectively, but these are areas we must continuously adapt and improve. Similarly, resources are always limited and take strategic planning to effectively execute security cooperation and foreign military sales. If confirmed, I will fully support the Continuous Process Improvement Board that the Department has established as an enduring body to improve speed and transparency of the foreign military sales process. Additionally, I will ensure the Joint Force organization and training continues to be refined to optimally support the National Defense Strategy.

Contested Logistics

255. Who do you believe acts as the lead for contested logistics in how both efficiencies are created and executed to support the NDS?

As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners.

256. Do you believe the Department of Defense needs to identify a single service or entity to act as the global contested logistics manager?

At this time, I do not. As the global integrator, the Joint Staff is positioned to synchronize the Department's efforts regarding contested logistics. The Joint Staff works with the Services to align their investments in infrastructure, force design, and posture, and supports the Combatant Commanders as they engage with allies and partners. If confirmed, I will continue to assess any changes in how global contested logistics is managed.

257. What is your current assessment for how the Department of Defense views contested logistics when it comes to both war games and operational planning?

The Joint Warfighting Concept and supporting concepts have focused the Department's attention on the contested logistics problem set. Logistics was once considered an enabling function and now it is clearly a pacing function. Today, wargamers are concentrating on the logistics challenges posed by the current environment and incorporating

outcomes from joint logistics wargames into higher level wargames that merge all warfare domains.

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Many DOD officials, including previous Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have advocated for accession to the Law of the Sea Convention.

258. Do you support United States accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea?

Yes. Like my predecessors, I support joining the Convention. Being a party to the Convention enhances the United States' security posture by reinforcing freedom of the seas and rights vital to ensuring our global force posture. The Convention provides legal certainty in the world's largest maneuver space.

259. In your view, what impact, if any, would U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention have on emerging maritime disputes, such as in the South China Sea and in the Arctic?

Acceding to the Convention would strengthen our credibility and strategic position on issues pertaining to these regions. While we do not take sides in the various territorial disputes in the South China Sea, we do have a national security interest in ensuring disputes are resolved peacefully, that countries adhere to the rule of law, and that all nations fully respect freedom of the seas. However, we undermine our influence by not signing up to the same rule book which we ask other countries to accept. As for the Arctic, the other Arctic coastal nations (Russia, Canada, Norway, and Denmark (Greenland)) understand the importance of the Convention and are in the process of utilizing the Convention's procedures to establish the outer limits of their extended continental shelves (ECS) in the Arctic. The United States has a significant ECS in the Arctic Ocean but cannot avail itself of the Convention's mechanisms to gain international recognition of its ECS. Acceding to the Convention would put our rights in the Arctic on a treaty footing in order to more fully and effectively interact with the other Arctic Council nations who are parties to the Convention, as well as strengthen our position on freedom of navigation in this increasingly important region.

Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program

The CTR Program, which has focused historically on accounting for, securing, and eliminating Cold War era weapons of mass destruction and materials in the states of the former Soviet Union, has expanded its focus to other countries. In addition, the CTR Program is widening its focus to biological weapons and capabilities, including biological surveillance and early warning, and encouraging the development of capabilities to reduce proliferation threats as well as working with host nations to secure stockpiles of dangerous pathogens at their high containment laboratories.

260. What are your views on the efficacy of the CTR Program?

The CTR program has consistently provided capabilities for allies and partners to reduce or eliminate their WMD stockpiles, secure their WMD facilities, and secure their borders against trafficking of WMD and related materials. CTR has unique attributes to include multi-year funding structure, rapid response capabilities, and authorities to directly engage with ally and partner civilian and military entities, making it a highly effective tool to address current and emergent WMD threats.

Notwithstanding the use and proliferation of chemical weapons documented recently in Libya and Syria, about 60% of CTR resources are allocated to biological programs.

261. Do you believe this shift in focus to biological programs accurately reflects the current threat?

Yes. CTR had already begun to focus on biological programs before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the lessons learned during the worldwide response to the pandemic validated the need for continued engagement with our allies and partners to assist them in bolstering their biological surveillance and detection capabilities and securing their biological facilities.

262. If confirmed, specifically what would you recommend to ensure the CTR program is capable of meeting its mission to roll back the threat of weapons of mass destruction?

If confirmed, I will emphasize collaboration with Department stakeholders and interagency partners to ensure CTR program activities align with our Biodefense Strategy, Countering WMD Strategy, and Combatant Commander Countering WMD priorities.

DOD Auditability

The Department of Defense has invested significant effort and dollars in preparing its financial information for annual audit reviews. However, the 2022 DOD-wide financial audit again resulted in a disclaimer of opinion.

263. If confirmed, what specific actions would you take or direct to improve DOD auditability?

If confirmed, I will work with our partners to address issues identified in the 2022 audit:

- Prioritization of resources toward obtaining a clean audit opinion
- Enhanced focus on leadership accountability toward reaching target audit goals
- Employing automated processes to enhance financial system outputs and reliability

264. If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to inculcate auditability as a command leadership responsibility, and not just default to a financial management community?

If confirmed, I will take steps to inculcate auditability as a responsibility of leaders at every level through emphasis on audit priority areas, partner collaboration for a strong financial management strategy, and developing a comprehensive audit roadmap with a clear vision for achieving a clean audit opinion.

Science, Technology, and Innovation

U.S. superiority in key areas of innovation is decreasing or has disappeared, while our competitors are engaging in aggressive military modernization and advanced weaponry development. DOD has identified 14 critical technology areas in which investment to develop next generation operational capabilities is imperative. These areas include: hypersonics; future generation wireless technology; advanced materials; integrated network systems-of-systems; directed energy; integrated sensing and cyber; space technology; quantum science; trusted artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy; microelectronics; renewable energy generation and storage; advanced computing and software; human-machine interfaces; and biotechnology. Much of the innovation in these technologies that could prove suitable for national defense purposes is occurring outside of the traditional defense industry.

265. What do you see as the most significant challenges (e.g., technical, organizational, or cultural) to DOD's development of these key technologies, or gaining access to such technologies from the commercial marketplace?

As I understand it today, the leading challenges include the adequate protection of our intellectual property, insufficient integration between the public and private defense-related industries required to bridge the valley of death in support of technology transition, and risk aversion that leads to a lack of agility in the development of key technologies.

266. How well do you think those Department investments in these technologies are appropriately focused, integrated, and synchronized across all Military Departments and Agencies?

There continues to be room for improvement in this area. Each Military Department and Agency has its own priorities, but it is imperative that we focus and synchronize our efforts. If confirmed, I will work diligently with Congress, the Department, and our Allies and Partners to ensure that we build an interoperable future Joint Force.

267. In addition to the technologies identified in the 2022 NDS, are there other technology areas in which you believe DOD must invest to ensure that the United States maintains its technological superiority in the long-term?

The 14 critical technology areas represent investments necessary to maintain technological superiority in the long-term and achieve NDS priorities.

268. What efforts is DOD making to identify new technologies developed commercially by the private sector and apply them to national security and warfighter purposes?

DoD has multiple initiatives within the defense research enterprise that are specifically focused on identifying commercial technologies that are currently in the private sector but have potential uses for national security and warfighter purposes. Examples include the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU), AFWERX, Army Futures Command, and NavalX which are all focused on accelerating technology interface.

One of the main objectives of the defense research enterprise is to develop advanced technologies that will be of benefit to the warfighter. In this regard, it is critical that technologies quickly transition from the development phase into testing and evaluation and ultimately into a program of record for the deployment of capability to the warfighter.

269. What are the challenges you perceive to effectively transitioning technologies from research programs into programs of record or deployed capabilities?

Effectively transitioning technologies from a research program to a program of record can be difficult because it requires significant cooperation and alignment across the R&D, acquisition, requirements, and resourcing processes.

270. How can the operational experience of the warfighter better be integrated into the research and development process? Are there appropriate places to interject warfighters in the interaction between the DOD research and engineering community and the private sector?

Warfighters need to be actively involved in the research process, incorporating their operational experience, so that we can bridge the gap between research and practical application. This will ensure that their operational experience is effectively incorporated into decision-making processes, research efforts, and technology development, ultimately leading to solutions that better meet their needs. Additionally, integrating experimental capabilities into exercises allows a more rapid feedback approach for the researchers while also preparing the force for emerging capabilities. We should also continue to leverage and increase warfighter interaction with innovation focused organizations such as SOFWERX and AFWERX that help to close the gap between DOD R&D and industry.

271. If confirmed as Chairman, what specific steps would you take to ensure that the warfighter is benefitting more quickly and directly from research being performed across the defense research enterprise?

My approach, if confirmed, would be to increase experimentation with emerging technology inside joint exercise venues thereby exposing more of the Joint Force early in the development phase of promising prototypes. Diverse teams comprised of warfighters, technologists, transition agents, all working together to better understand operational concepts, employment options, and desired outcomes could shorten evaluation and adoption timelines, and provide more operational context for the research enterprise. By actively involving warfighters in the research process and incorporating their operational experience, we can bridge the gap between research and practical application, resulting in solutions better suited to meet the warfighter's real-world challenges.

272. If confirmed, what would you do to increase the interaction between DOD labs and the private sector, and between DOD labs and the rest of the DOD innovation enterprise to include the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, the Strategic Capabilities Office, the Defense Innovation Unit, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency?

The Joint Force relies on advanced technologies to outpace the threat. Accelerating innovation is a known challenge; however, the Department has implemented several key pilot initiatives to transition emerging technologies into warfighting capability. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and innovation enterprise to break down barriers and drive open dialogue among stakeholders to enable timely transition of critical capabilities into the hands of the Joint Force.

273. What steps should the Department take to ensure that the foreign technical talent that we educate and support remains in here in the United States and commits to working on our high-priority national missions to maintain our technological superiority?

The Joint Force relies on advanced technologies to outpace the threat. Accelerating innovation is a known challenge; however, the Department has implemented several key pilot initiatives to transition emerging technologies into warfighting capability. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and innovation enterprise to break down barriers and drive open dialogue among stakeholders to enable timely transition of critical capabilities into the hands of the Joint Force.

274. How could we leverage our defense labs and DOD research funding programs to overmatch Chinese efforts by providing resources and facilities to attract technical talent to stay and work in the United States?

A primary way to attract and retain technical talent within the United States is to expand our defense labs to partnerships with universities and small businesses around the country. Our ability to tap into the intellectual capital of the American people, their innovative ideas, and our production capacity, has made, and will continue to give, the U.S.

military competitive advantage.

Joint Acquisition

- 275. What are your views regarding the effectiveness of joint acquisition programs, especially in delivering integrated and interoperable solutions for the Department and which programs would you consider to be candidates for joint development and acquisition?**

Developing, procuring, delivering, and sustaining our nation's needed joint warfighting capabilities and capacity requires the continued successes of joint acquisition programs. For example, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle program provides the Joint Force with needed current capabilities. Integrated and interoperable solutions are particularly important for the future all-domain warfighting environment. If confirmed, I will look for other opportunities to pursue joint development and acquisition programs to address joint warfighting requirements.

- 276. What are your views on joint, enabling or cross-cutting capabilities that may not be treated as acquisition programs, such as JADC2? Do you have sufficient authority to advocate or direct the services to ensure there are no seams in planning or execution of such efforts?**

In the current global security environment, the United States military faces agile adversaries who increasingly seek to undermine our strategic and operational strengths by impeding, and where possible, denying our command and control (C2) capabilities. The ability of the U.S. military to regain and maintain information and decision advantage through non acquisition programs such as JADC2 must remain a top priority for the Department. CJCS has full authority to advocate for Combatant Command and services' capabilities and if confirmed, I will use the granted authorities and assess whether additional authorities are required to assist the Combatant Commands and services with planning to foster joint capability and manage Joint Force development. I will continue to partner with OUSD (A&S) to strengthen planning and execution to enable integrated, end-to-end mission capability.

- 277. If confirmed, what role would you assign to yourself in ensuring that joint acquisition priorities are given full and fair consideration in Military Service budget processes?**

If confirmed, I will provide my military advice to the Secretary of Defense on all matters, including the formulation of the budget. The Chairman's Program Recommendation (CPR) provides the Chairman with a formal mechanism to communicate statutory military advice on programs and budget issues, to include joint acquisition priorities.

278. Do you believe that the combatant command's role in the acquisition process is sufficient to ensure that they can get needed capabilities fielded to them in a timelier manner? If not, are there other tools or authorities needed?

If confirmed, I will ensure the JROC continues to seek and consider input from the Combatant Commanders. Combatant Commanders serve as advisors to the JROC. Combatant Commanders serve a critical role in developing requirements and addressing capability gaps. The Combatant Commanders specifically identify risk and what is hindering the accomplishment of their Global Campaign Plan objectives via their Integrated Priority List, the Annual Joint Assessment, and the Capability Gap Assessment processes. If confirmed, I see my role as an integrator between the needs of the Combatant Commanders, the realities of Service budgets, and the priorities of DoD leadership.

Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC)

The JROC is vested with the responsibility to assess joint military capabilities; establish and approve joint performance requirements that ensure interoperability between military capabilities; and identify new joint military capabilities based on advances in technology and concepts of operation.

279. How would you assess the effectiveness of the JROC in establishing joint requirements for submission to the DOD acquisition process?

The JROC recently incorporated a top-down approach to concept-driven, threat-informed, capability development. The JROC is using the Joint Warfighting Concept as the starting point to establish requirements from a joint perspective. This changed process is still nascent and it is too early to accurately determine effectiveness.

280. In your view, have recent acquisition reforms that shifted authorities to the Military Services affected the JROC's ability to assess joint performance requirements? If so, how?

No. The Joint Performance Requirement (JPR) guidelines enable the JROC to delegate authorities where appropriate to support a streamlined and responsive system that retains the ability of the JROC to meet statutory responsibilities. The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) manual was revised to address these shifting authorities. JCIDS specifies the JROC's oversight of the streamlined joint performance requirements enabled through the existing rapid capabilities development programs. Additionally, the JROC works closely with the complementary capability development processes further supporting interoperability and special authorities.

281. If confirmed, how would you ensure that the JROC has the authority and information it needs to execute its statutory functions?

If confirmed, I am committed to ensuring the JROC remains flexible, adaptable, and

postured to ensure joint interoperability.

The Joint Capabilities Integration and Development Systems (JCIDS)

The JCIDS process was established to address overlap and duplication in Military Services' programs. JCIDS is intended to provide the information the JROC needs to identify the capabilities and associated operational performance requirements needed by the joint warfighter.

282. Is the JCIDS process effective in providing the information the JROC requires to anticipate both the current and the future needs of the joint force?

Yes. JCIDS is flexible and adaptable, allowing it to transform to meet emerging needs of the joint force. The recent incorporation of a top-down approach allows the JROC to holistically look at joint force needs across time horizons that are threat-informed and joint concept-driven.

283. How would you, if confirmed, drive the development and articulation of future joint concepts from which each Military Service's concept development, requirements generation, and acquisition processes will derive? Does DOD have the requisite analytic capabilities to develop and assess future joint concepts, and the associated capabilities and force structure?

The Joint War fighting Concept (JWC) began under GEN Milley's tenure and is in its third iteration. The JWC provides an overarching approach to describe how the joint force will fight in a future conflict and aligns Service concepts. If confirmed, I would continue refining the JWC and using it to drive development of supporting and Service concepts, requirements generation, and acquisition processes.

Yes. I believe DoD has the requisite analytic capabilities to develop and assess future joint concepts, capabilities, and force structure.

284. How have recent acquisition reforms, including the implementation of rapid acquisition pathways in which requirement are not generated via JCIDS, affected the ability of the JROC to identify and advocate for joint requirements?

Recent acquisition reforms, including the implementation of rapid acquisition pathways have not affected the JROC's ability to identify and advocate for joint requirements. The JROC's top-down approach linked to Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC) publication, and adoption of the capability portfolio management review (CPMR) process enabled it to continue to advocate for joint requirements. However, if confirmed, I will continue to work with the Joint Chiefs to ensure that Service controlled initiatives are not stove-piped or duplicated, and that all strive to present joint integrated solutions.

285. With increasing emphasis on how to leverage commercial, dual use technologies to support national security needs, do you have the access to

expertise and interchange you need to assess and integrate an understanding of the commercial technology marketplace into the requirements generation process?

Increasingly yes. Initiatives at the Department level such as the Defense Innovation Unit, Service rapid acquisition operations, and programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research/Small Business Technology Transfer are providing increased access into the commercial technology spaces. The Deputy Secretary of Defense's current Innovation Steering Group will also drive the Department to continue to better take advantage of its opportunities in the area of commercial, dual technologies and incorporate these efforts into the requirements generation processes.

286. In your view, what is the appropriate role of Combatant Commanders in the JCIDS process? If confirmed, how would you improve the effectiveness of the process in identifying both the near-term and long-term needs of the Combatant Commander?

Combatant Commanders serve as advisors to the JROC when matters related to their area of responsibility or function are under consideration. Combatant Commanders serve a critical role in identifying capability gaps to inform development of near- and far-term solutions. The Combatant Commanders specifically identify risk and what is hindering the accomplishment of their Global Campaign Plan objectives via the Annual Joint Assessment and the Capability Gap Assessment processes. The Urgent Acquisition pathway allows for the Combatant Commander to raise issues for acceleration. If confirmed, I will ensure the JROC continues to seek and consider input from the Combatant Commanders.

287. Do you believe that today's JROC and JCIDS processes are sufficient to identify where opportunities for multi-Service collaboration exist, or where programs could or should be modified to take advantage of a related acquisition program?

Yes. JROC and JCIDS processes are flexible and adaptable. The JROC, and through its subordinate bodies and working groups, provide forums for all Services to collaborate on joint requirements.

288. Do you have any recommendations for changes to the structure, authority, or processes of the JROC or the JCIDS?

Not at this time. However, if confirmed, I will continue to assess the structure, authority, and processes of the JROC and JCIDS to bring forward any recommendations.

The streamlined middle-tier acquisition authorities enacted in Section 804 of the FY 2016 NDAA seek to speed fielding of advanced technologies and systems by waiving the JCIDS process.

289. What do you perceive as the downsides of not using the formal JCIDS process?

JCIDS was created to ensure joint interoperability, so avoiding JCIDS could put the onus of joint interoperability on the proposing Service. JCIDS, along with providing interoperability review, and providing enterprise awareness of capability development effort, supports the fulfillment of the Title 10 requirements to review, assess, and prioritize Joint Force Capabilities. Early identification of interoperability and potential redundancy is key to ensuring we get capability development right, early on avoiding delay in fielding to the Joint Force.

290. What is your opinion of the initial efforts in using 804 authorities?

I am pleased to see the depth and breadth of activities looking to accelerate the delivery of warfighting capabilities to the field. If confirmed, I will continue to work with stakeholders to evaluate the use of 804 authorities and provide feedback as necessary.

One of the challenges facing many acquisition programs—ranging from weapons systems to business systems—is unrealistic and unfeasible technical requirements.

291. What best practices can the Department employ to generate realistic and technically feasible requirements, particularly in sophisticated, rapidly evolving technical areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence?

The DoD requirements process must be informed by the results of its rapid prototyping authorities such as Section 804 to ensure requirements are realistic and feasible. Additionally, to the maximum extent possible, the DoD should require its systems to be open and modular to minimize upgrade costs as technology continues to rapidly evolve, especially in areas such as cybersecurity, hypersonics, and artificial intelligence.

292. If confirmed, what actions would you take to strengthen or support the technical knowledge, capabilities, and talent management of personnel responsible for requirements generation?

If confirmed, I will continue to support efforts by OUSD (A&S) and the Defense Acquisition University to develop training programs for DoD personnel with the responsibility for developing requirements.

Test and Evaluation

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

293. Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe it appropriate to procure weapon systems and equipment that have not been demonstrated through test and evaluation to be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable?

The Department has a robust T&E program that identifies a tailored plan for each program based on its unique specifications and intended operational environment. I don't see any circumstances where it would be appropriate to not conduct some level of testing of weapons and/or equipment before fielding.

294. Do you think the current operational test and evaluation system also provides for the flexibility to assess commercial technologies that might be acquired or fields by DOD through means or processes that are not traditional acquisition programs of record?

The operational test and evaluation system is designed to test major defense programs or items/components of a weapon system, equipment, or munitions under realistic combat conditions. I do believe the current operational test and evaluation system provides the flexibility to assess commercial technologies.

295. Are you satisfied with DOD's test and evaluation capabilities, including the test and evaluation workforce and infrastructure of the Military Services? In which areas, if any, do you feel the Department should be developing new test and evaluation capabilities?

Yes. The DoD possesses robust test and evaluation capabilities. I have observed areas where the Joint Force could advance. Emerging technologies in cyber, space, AI and quantum computing are potential growth areas and may require new test and evaluation capabilities.

296. If confirmed, how would you approach your relationship with the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, particularly in light of the independence and direct reporting relationships and responsibilities accorded the Director in law?

If confirmed, I will work to build a close working relationship with the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, to maximize the lethality, sustainability, and survivability of the Joint Force.

297. If confirmed, how would you approach your relationship with the Director, Developmental Test and Evaluation and the Director of the Test Resource Management Center (TRMC), both of which sit within the office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering?

The Joint Staff maintains strong relationships OSD R&E across the board. Our Force Development and Capability Development communities have close working relationships with OUSD(R&E). The Joint Warfighting Concept and the Capability Gap Assessment

inform alignment and prioritization of R&E initiatives to address our most pressing challenges and gaps. If confirmed, I would approach my relationship with Director of OT&E and Director of TRMC in the same collaborative manner to find ways to share resources and information while accelerating opportunities to drive new capabilities into the Joint Force.

DOD Readiness

298. How would you assess the current readiness of the DOD Components—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—to execute the 2022 NDS and Combatant Commanders’ associated plans?

I am confident that we can protect the homeland, meet our alliance commitments, and maintain a competitive advantage over any potential adversary. Through stable and adequate levels of funding we are working to improve readiness and modernization across the force considering the geostrategic environment and threat in order to increase our lethality, flexibility, and resilience.

299. What is your assessment of the risk the Combatant Commands and the Combat Support Agencies have accepted in regard to their readiness to execute the operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

Exercising strategic discipline to continuously calibrate Joint Force weight of effort between campaigning and rapidly building warfighting advantage to deter now and reduce future risk is the central premise of the 2022 NDS and NMS. With stable and adequate levels of funding we have been able to address risk in force readiness and are restoring capability to respond to contingencies. The Joint Force must balance risk between its ability to deter our adversaries through operational campaigning and prioritizing Service modernization efforts to achieve superiority in multiple domains. This is not done without challenges and/or tough choices. Our competitive advantage has eroded over time because of two decades of continuous operations, an advancing threat, and exacerbated by continuing resolutions. With sustained, predictable, adequate, and timely funding we can continue to improve readiness, build the future force that maintains our competitive advantage, and decrease risk.

300. If confirmed, specifically what actions would you recommend to restore full spectrum readiness in all DOD Components—across the domains of materiel and equipment, personnel, and training—and on what timelines?

If confirmed, my actions will center on continuing our current efforts to address joint readiness and further develop the warfighting capabilities needed to defend the Nation in the future. We face very real and significant challenges today, and we must continue to adequately invest in the future. To address this dynamic, we need to provide the Joint Force the required capabilities and capacity through sustained and predictable funding, to maintain a robust exercise program, and to continued talent management improvements over the course of several years to maintain our qualitative and quantitative competitive advantage.

Operational Energy and Energy Resilience

The Department defines operational energy as the energy required for training, moving, and sustaining military forces and weapons platforms for military operations, including the energy used by tactical power systems, generators, and weapons platforms. On the battlefield of the future, warfighters will need exponentially more energy with rapid recharge and resupply over longer operating distances. The quality of electricity will matter too—the DOD’s vehicles, sensors, robots, cyber forces, directed energy weapons, and artificial intelligence will be controlled by systems sensitive to fluctuations in voltage or frequency.

301. If confirmed, are there actions you can take to harness innovations in operational energy and link them with emerging joint operational concepts?

The need for large volumes of Operational Energy remains one of the Department’s greatest logistical burdens and largest vulnerabilities especially in a contested environment. In line with the National Defense Strategy, we will prioritize energy demand reduction and the adoption of technologies that reduce logistics requirements in contested or austere environments. Through the implementation of the Joint Warfighting Concept, we are seeking innovative capabilities to address key operational problems. Operational energy innovations contribute to offsetting those problems and are being examined in wargames, tested in field experiments, and integrated into joint exercises.

302. In what specific areas, if any, do you believe DOD needs to improve the incorporation of energy considerations in strategic planning processes?

In my view, DoD can improve the incorporation of energy considerations in the following specific areas:

- Continue to assess Combatant Command posture and readiness annually. These reviews can highlight where energy considerations may be overlooked within the strategic planning process.
- Ensure that our Joint concepts and operational plans are fully informed of risks associated with contested logistics and threats to the assured delivery of energy.
- Align our force development and design efforts with appropriate risks to energy supportability and required posture.

If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Staff to include requirements for joint force energy supportability and demand reduction in recurring strategic guidance and endorse energy efficiency, water conservation, use of renewable energy, and emerging technologies throughout strategic planning processes.

303. How can DOD acquisition systems better address requirements related to a military platform’s use of energy?

Energy supportability is one of the four mandatory Key Performance Parameters (KPPs) required for all Department programs. The Joint Staff conducts an energy supportability analysis for all requirements documents when the JROC designates the energy KPP as a Joint Performance Requirement. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Joint Staff's role in prioritizing energy supportability for new capabilities.

304. If confirmed, are there actions you can take to prioritize energy resilience and mission assurance for DOD, including acquiring and deploying sustainable and renewable energy assets to support mission critical functions, and address known vulnerabilities?

Energy resilience is part of every assessment performed on existing critical infrastructure. If confirmed, I will ensure the identification, vulnerability assessment, and risk mitigation of mission critical assets remain a Joint Staff priority.

Environmental Contaminants

The environmental and health effects associated with exposure to Per- and Poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have long been a major concern for Congress, DOD, military families, and communities in the vicinity of military installations.

305. If confirmed, what actions would you take to address PFOS/PFOA contamination on DOD installations?

If confirmed, I will support the Department's commitment to addressing DoD's PFAS releases as quickly as possible in a deliberative, holistic, and transparent manner. I understand that DoD is conducting assessments of PFAS use and potential release at 707 installations and National Guard locations. I will support the PFAS Task Force in those efforts and support the Department's commitment to protect the health of its Service Members, their families, and the communities in which DoD serves.

306. If confirmed, what would be your approach to addressing the health concerns of service members and their families regarding alleged exposures to potentially harmful contaminants on U.S. military installations and in the context of performing military duties?

I support DoD's priority to quickly address risks to human health from drinking water impacted by PFAS releases. If confirmed, I would continue and build upon the actions already underway to address Service Member concerns including streamlining processes by which housing residents can raise health concerns to leadership, testing of DoD-owned water sources at all installations, site cleanup, supporting research to determine potential health effects from exposure, and ongoing action by our health providers to document and treat issues, as appropriate. Ultimately, our Service Members and their families should not have to worry about their health while living in homes on U.S. military installations or when performing their military duties.

Readiness and Resource Impacts from Extreme Weather

In 2017, three hurricanes resulted in over \$1.3 billion in damage to military installations across the U.S. In 2018, extreme weather events caused roughly \$9 billion in damage at Tyndall Air Force Base, Camp Lejeune, and Offutt Air Force Base.

307. How would you assess the readiness and resource impacts on DOD from recent extreme weather events?

The impacts are significant by disrupting operations and damaging critical infrastructure. Based on the severity of the event, the cost creates a strain on our finite resources and forces tough decisions if not supplemented with additional funding. These extreme weather events impact infrastructure related to mission execution and disrupts scheduled training for operational and supporting units. The combination of which creates challenges to maintain readiness. The impacts can also extend to family support issues. The loss of affected services, housing, schools, and exchange services for example, is an inconvenience that can affect Service member mission focus, morale, and retention.

308. Based on these readiness and resource impacts, do you believe it necessary to use more resilient designs in DOD infrastructure?

Yes. As we design, site, and build future infrastructure, we should take advantage of emerging information on changing conditions and engineering standards to reduce the impacts of extreme weather and changing climate. If confirmed, I will continue supporting ongoing DOD actions to implement appropriate planning and design standards that account for extreme weather events, projected sea level rise, and other climate change impacts.

Defense Department and Intelligence Community Collaboration

Since September 11, 2001, collaboration—both analytical and operational—between DOD and the Intelligence Community has grown increasingly close. On one hand, seamless collaboration is vital to an effective and rapid response to non-traditional threats, and bringing together the strengths of the full spectrum of defense and intelligence capabilities can generate more effective solutions to complex problems. On the other hand, without effective management and oversight, such collaboration risks blurring distinct agency missions, authorities, and funding, as well as creating redundant lines of effort.

309. In your view, are there aspects of the current relationship between the Department and the Intelligence Community that should be re-examined or modified?

The Department and the IC have developed a great relationship that has led to some remarkable collaboration in identifying and analyzing adversaries and threats. As we face near-peer competitors, this collaboration needs to increase to maintain our competitive edge. If confirmed, I am interested in exploring improvements in information sharing, leveraging

industry lessons learned, and the development and integration of emerging technologies to keep ahead of our adversaries. This includes quickly developing and integrating artificial intelligence, machine learning, cyber, big data for warfighting, multi-level security, and collection capabilities.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities

Demand for ISR of every kind has grown exponentially in recent years, largely due to the enhanced situational awareness and targeting capabilities they afford commanders. Almost all of the geographic Combatant Commands have validated ISR requirements that are not being met.

310. What is your assessment of DOD's current disposition of ISR assets across the Combatant Commands?

ISR asset allocation to Combatant Commands is aligned with National Defense Strategy priorities. The current ISR asset allocation is a result of a deliberative planning process and can be adjusted to meet emergent Combatant Command needs.

311. What do you perceive as the most concerning shortfalls in both the capability and availability of ISR assets?

Demand for ISR has and will likely always outpace supply. The Services continue to deploy ISR forces at the maximum sustainable capacity with nothing held in reserve. Simultaneously, evolving adversary capabilities are driving a deliberate move toward higher capacity modernized ISR systems. This would include developing tools to take advantage of space-based ISR and publicly available information.

312. What is your assessment of current service efforts to develop increased capabilities?

The DoD is in the process of modernizing ISR capabilities by investing in platforms, sensors, and communication networks that will operate at greater capacity in high-threat and denied environments. The Department's focus on space, cyber, and other domains will produce survivable and resilient ISR capabilities for the future Joint Force.

313. How does increased demand square with Services' plans to divest many of the platforms providing ISR to the Combatant Commanders?

The DoD needs to divest of legacy ISR platforms in order to invest in robust survivable ISR capabilities that will provide sensing and targeting at speed in a highly contested environment against a peer adversary. The investments in space-based ISR will provide greater collection capacity and access for the Combatant Commands particular in a denied environment. The Department will remain vigilant to ensure Combatant Commanders are appropriately resourced as new ISR systems are fielded.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Despite significant efforts by the Military Services over the past decade to enhance their prevention of, and response to sexual assaults, including measures to care for victims and hold assailants accountable, the current data continues to show increasing prevalence of sexual assault and unwanted sexual conduct, primarily for female service members aged 17 to 24. These findings echo reports this year of increases in the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault at the Military Service Academies.

- 314. Do you believe the policies, programs, and resources that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent and respond to sexual assault, and to protect service members who report sexual assault from retaliation, are working? If not, what else must be done?**

The Department remains committed to the well-being of our Service members and we must continue to invest in prevention and response resources to prevent harmful behavior. As a leader I am determined to create an environment where each service member is treated with value, dignity, and respect. I will continue to support efforts to address chain of command accountability and prevent retaliatory behavior.

The Independent Review Commission's on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) recommendations are instrumental in the Department's efforts to produce meaningful change; however, the results of these efforts are not yet observable in Force-wide assessments. I am committed to seeing these changes through and will be prepared to identify additional actions or adjustments as the IRC recommendations are implemented.

- 315. If confirmed, what specific role would you establish for yourself in preventing sexual harassment in the armed forces and in the DOD civilian workforce?**

If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to continuously evaluate and refine prevention and response policies to improve oversight and accountability. I will emphasize that Joint Force readiness depends on the readiness of our Service members and readiness is most prevalent in cohesive units with empowered chains of command. I will emphasize the imperative to continue improving the military's ability to cultivate healthy command climates and stop harmful behaviors before they occur. Finally, I will ensure leaders and Service members have access to the existing resources and those being implemented as result of Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC) like the climate assessments and the prevention workforce. Sexual assault and harassment have no place in the DoD, and harmful to building a cohesive team.

316. Do you perceive that you need additional authorities from Congress to improve the Department's programs to prevent sexual harassment and sexual assault?

I believe we have sufficient authorities to implement the remaining IRC recommendations. I will always support continually evaluating our efforts to prevent sexual harassment and assault, while working with partners in Congress on these issues.

The most recent report on the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment at the Military Service Academies revealed disturbing levels of sexual harassment in particular, placing the Service Academies among the poorest performing military units in incidents of harassment, suggesting an environment conducive to sexual assault and other misconduct.

317. What is your reaction to this report, and what actions would you propose to reduce the prevalence of sexual harassment at the Service Academies?

I am deeply troubled by this information about what has been occurring. The behaviors highlighted in that report have no place at the Academies, let alone the Force writ large.

The Superintendents' leadership in this space is critical in changing course. Much of their solution set is to implement the recommendations of the Secretary's Independent Review Commission. These recommendations focus on changes that help work toward the positive, professional climates we not only expect but demand in the military.

The Secretary of Defense recently directed on-site evaluations of the Service Academies designed to identify gaps and best practices in command climate and the prevention of harmful behaviors. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Austin, the Services, and the Service Academies' leadership to address the forthcoming recommendations from those evaluations and continuously evaluate and refine prevention and response policies to improve oversight and accountability.

I plan to stay fully engaged with Service leadership to ensure leaders create environments where our future leaders can live and learn in a culture of dignity and respect.

Active and Reserve Component End Strength

In the face of historic recruiting challenges, active force end strength continues to shrink across all military services except the Space Force.

318. What aggregate Active end strength do you believe is necessary to meet the demands placed on the Military Services by the 2022 NDS and associated operational plans?

The strength requested in the FY24 budget submission represents manpower requirements across the services and supports the direction of the 2022 NDS. The services remain committed to “quality over quantity”. This budget seeks to meet this critical challenge today, tomorrow, and into the future by providing resources to support the National Defense Strategy.

319. In your view, do the Reserve Components serve as an operational reserve, a strategic reserve, or both? In light of your answer, should the Reserve Components be supported by improved equipment, increased training, and higher levels of overall resourcing for readiness going forward?

The Reserve Component is an integral part of the total force. The Reserve Component serves as both an operational and strategic reserve. The Reserve Component deserves to train on and operate the best equipment possible in order to execute their key role. Training standards for the active and reserve components should be the same.

Religious Accommodation

320. As mandated by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Fiscal Year 2013 NDAA and Fiscal Year 2014 NDAA, do each of the Military Service’s policies and processes appropriately accommodate the religious practices of individual service members, in your view? (Chaplain)

Yes. Each of the Services recognizes the importance of religious liberties and accommodation for Service members, not only in support of their fundamental human rights but also to support broader Service cultures of spiritual fitness, readiness, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. The existing Service policies ensure that each request for religious accommodation is reviewed on a case basis, considering the full range of facts and circumstances relevant to each specific request, and analyzing these against the compelling governmental interest of mission accomplishment to find the least restrictive means to accommodate.

321. In your view, would a more comprehensive Department-wide policy on religious accommodation promote consistency and uniformity across the services? (Chaplain)

No. Each of the Service policies on religious accommodation is already in compliance with the Department of Defense Instruction on Religious Liberty in the Military Services, providing a foundational consistency and uniform processes. There is also a need for Service-specific deliberation. Mission requirements can differ between Services, to include differences in Service culture related to unit cohesion, order, and discipline. The current practice provides foundational consistency and uniform processes across Services while also allowing for Service-specific considerations. It should be maintained.

Military Quality of Life and Family Readiness

The Committee remains concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family advocacy and parenting skills programs; childcare; spouse education and employment support; health care; and morale, welfare and recreation (MWR) services such as Commissary and Military Exchange stores.

322. If confirmed, what quality of life and MWR programs would you consider a priority?

The Department of Defense has a sacred obligation to take care of our service members and their families. Quality of Life is fundamental to recruiting and retaining the all-volunteer force today and in the future. The most important aspects of service member quality of life are economic stability, first rate medical care, improved housing, spouse employment, and childcare.

I will continue to encourage the advancement of MWR programs and community partnerships that both promote well-being while also adapting to the current demands of our service members. These programs include outdoor recreation, sports and fitness, and child development and youth programs. If confirmed, I will unite with the Service Chiefs to promote and sustain effective quality of life programs to meet the needs of our service members and their families.

323. What factors would you consider in assessing which MWR programs are ineffective or outmoded and thus potentially suitable for elimination or reduction in scope?

The maintenance and the development of effective quality of life programs is a priority for our Service members and their families. If confirmed, I would work with the Service Chiefs and look primarily at usage metrics, benefit, cost, and Service member and family feedback. These programs are critical recruiting and retention tools and must be adequately resourced to ensure a resilient force.

324. If confirmed, how would you ensure that support related to mobilization, deployment, and family readiness is provided to Army Reserve and National Guard families, as well as to Active Army families who do not reside near a military installation?

If confirmed, I will work with the Service Chiefs to ensure the needs of family members, both Active and Reserve Component, of mobilized and/or deployed Service members are met. As the Department continues to emphasize Total Force policies, programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, Military One Source, community partnerships, and others that address challenges unique to military service are vital in developing and sustaining resilience among Service members and their families.

Military Health System Reform

Section 702 of the Fiscal Year 2017 NDAA, as modified by Sections 711 and 712 of the Fiscal Year 2019 NDAA, transferred the administration and management of military hospitals and clinics from the Military Departments to the Defense Health Agency (DHA), a Combat Support Agency. Additionally, Section 732 of the FY 2019 NDAA required the development of joint force medical capabilities that meet the operation planning requirements of the combatant commands.

325. In your view, in the aggregate, how many military medical providers and what medical capabilities, are required to support the Combatant Commanders' operational plans associated with the 2022 NDS?

The National Defense Strategy contains globally integrated medical requirements of rapidly aggregating medical capabilities during conflict, moving casualties in a contested environment, and expanding military trauma centers in the homeland to care for casualties. Our medical force of roughly 180,000 will be close to fully employed to execute and sustain operational plans for a large-scale overseas conflict. Our medical force does require additional surge medical capacity within medical centers of the Department, as well as leveraging partnerships with Veterans Health Administration and National Disaster Medical System to execute homeland contingency plan requirements. As we design a future medical force, the Military Health System needs to prioritize efforts to meet these globally integrated requirements and enable air, land, and sea platforms to deploy agile medical capabilities worldwide. If confirmed, I will work across DoD and with Congress on these efforts.

326. In your view, do military medical providers across the Military Departments possess today the critical wartime medical competencies required to save the lives of service members injured in combat or contingency operations?

Yes. I believe the joint medical force possesses the competencies necessary to save lives in a kinetic environment, as evidenced by their performance in overseas contingency operations over the last 20 years. As we continue to lose personnel with combat casualty care experience, it is imperative that we invest in the workforce to generate critical wartime medical professionals in our military medical centers and hospitals. The Department must also leverage partnerships with Veterans Health Administration, Health & Human Services, and National Disaster Medical System, and in private sector partnerships to treat complex care patients in peacetime and sustain the competency and capacity to recover combat casualties in wartime. Additionally, we must embed medical capabilities far forward to increase survivability in a contested, degraded, and contaminated wartime environment of the future.

327. In your view, are the Services adequately supporting DHA by assigning to MTFs the appropriate number of military medical providers in the specialties needed at the MTFs?

The Department is working to invest in the healthcare workforce that includes the

Services' military medical providers and Defense Health Agency civilian medical providers to improve primary and specialty care access in our MTFs. We continue to assess the adequacy of military medical providers in the MTFs and their overall readiness. Additional military and civilian workforce in the MTFs improve access to care for 9.6 million beneficiaries, improves readiness and maximizes education programs for our medical professionals, and mitigates the rising costs to provide care in the civilian network. If confirmed, I will work across DoD and with Congress on these efforts.

Suicide Prevention

On May 17, 2022, Secretary Austin established the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) to conduct a comprehensive review of clinical and non-clinical suicide prevention and response programs across the force.

328. If confirmed, what specific role and tasks would you establish for yourself and for the Joint Staff in implementing the SPRIRC's recommendations?

The health, safety, and well-being of our Force is a top priority for the Department. If confirmed, I will continue to support the Department's efforts in addressing suicide in the military. I support the on-going strategies to encourage help-seeking behavior, minimize stigma, and increase visibility and access to necessary resources and communication tools. The Department is firmly committed to preventing suicides in our Joint Force because one suicide is one too many.

I support the rapid implementation of the ten (10) recommendations outlined in Phase 1 of the SecDef's 16 March 2023, *Next Steps on Suicide Prevention in the Military* memo and will support any follow-on recommendations that are approved for implementation.

329. If confirmed, specifically what would you do to ensure that sufficient suicide prevention and mental health resources are available to deployed servicemembers, as well as to servicemembers and their families at home station?

The Services have been providing leadership guidance on how to build resiliency in the force. This is supporting an environment of trust and cohesion that's foundational in suicide prevention. Commanders and leaders at all levels must have the required training and resources to identify and treat all health requirements in garrison and deployed environments. Embedding mental health resources and capabilities within deploying units has been very well received and had a positive impact. I support the Services and their efforts to recruit and retain mental health providers and other related entities in support of our Service Members and their families.

Mental Health

DOD has made great strides in reducing the stigma associated with help-seeking

behaviors, but many servicemembers, especially senior leaders, remain concerned that their military careers will be adversely affected should their chains of command become aware that they are seeking mental or behavioral health care. At the same time, the military chain of command has a legitimate need to be aware of physical and mental health conditions that may affect the readiness of the service members under their command.

330. In your view, does DOD effectively bridge the gap between a service member's desire for confidentiality and the chain of command's legitimate need to know about matters that may affect individual service member and the unit readiness?

Yes, I believe DoD has made significant changes to bridge the gap between Service Members' desires and the chain of command's legitimate need to know. We continue to assess how we can help those who struggle with complex issues, while still ensuring the readiness and lethality of the force. Mental health is health, and we need to optimize every aspect of the Warfighter and their families. I fully support Service Members and their families seeking mental health care.

Service of Transgender Persons

Each of the Service Chiefs has testified before this Committee that in their personal experience, the service of transgender individuals in their preferred gender has had no negative impact on unit or overall military readiness.

331. In your personal experience, has the service of transgender individuals in their preferred gender had any negative impact on unit or overall military readiness?

I am not aware of any significant impacts to unit readiness based on transgender persons serving in the Air Force.

332. What would be the impact on readiness of requiring the separation of all transgender soldiers currently serving in the military? Please provide specific data to support your view.

Any reduction in ready and fully deployable service members that meet all standards associated with military service would presumably have an effect on readiness.

Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes