

**Advance Policy Questions for the Honorable Chuck Hagel
Nominee to be Secretary of Defense**

(1) Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the combatant commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the combatant commanders.

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

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

I believe that the success of our Armed Forces since the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act amply demonstrates that the Act has enhanced the ability of our Armed Forces to defend our nation and to operate successfully as joint forces under our combatant commanders. If confirmed, I will evaluate the implementation of the Act, and will make recommendations for modifications if necessary. At present, I am aware of no need to make changes to the Act.

(2) Duties of the Secretary of Defense

Section 113 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Secretary of Defense is the principal assistant to the President in all matters relating to the Department of Defense. Subject to the direction of the President, the Secretary of Defense, under section 113, has authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (DOD).

Do you believe there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of the Secretary of Defense?

I believe Title 10 provides the Secretary of Defense appropriate, sufficient, and clear authority to lead the Department of Defense and to serve as the principal assistant to the President on all matters relating to the Department. I do not foresee needing to take any actions to enhance the ability of the Secretary of Defense to execute assigned duties.

What changes to section 113, if any, would you recommend?

At present, I believe that section 113 provides sufficient legal authority to the Secretary of Defense to allow him to perform his two primary functions. I do not foresee needing to recommend changes to section 113.

(3) Qualifications

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

I volunteered for the draft and then volunteered to go to Vietnam after I received orders to go to Germany. I served a twelve month tour which included the Tet Offensive in 1968. I rose to the rank of infantry Sergeant. For ten of those months, I served alongside my younger brother Tom. I understand what it is like to be a soldier in war. I also understand what happens when there is poor morale and discipline among the troops and a lack of clear objectives, intelligence, and command and control from Washington. I believe that experience will help me as Secretary of Defense to ensure we maintain the best fighting force in the world, protect our men and women in uniform, and ensure that we are cautious and certain when contemplating the use of force.

When I returned from Vietnam, I graduated from the University of Nebraska, using the G.I. bill. Because of that benefit, I co-authored with fellow Vietnam veteran Senator Jim Webb, the new G.I. bill which became law in 2008. I know the importance of providing our military personnel and their families with the benefits they need, not only while in the military, but once they return to civilian life, and I will not forget that if I am confirmed as Secretary of Defense.

I was wounded twice during my tour in Vietnam. In 1981, I was appointed by President Reagan and confirmed by the Senate to be Deputy Administrator of the Veterans Administration. I later resigned because of inadequate support for Vietnam veterans suffering from Agent Orange and other Vietnam veterans programs that were being eliminated. I have worked with, and on behalf of veterans' organizations my entire life. I know when the system is working, and when it is failing. The past decade of war has produced tens of thousands of wounded warriors. Many are still on active duty. Others have or are transitioning to civilian life. All need the best care we they can give them. Because of my own experiences, I will honor that commitment to veterans and their families if I become Secretary of Defense.

While I do not believe anyone can be fully prepared to manage an organization as large and complex as the Department of Defense, I believe that I have significant management experience that gives me a strong sense of what needs to be done. Most important is building and working with teams. This is always an essential foundational element of management and leadership. In the 1970's, I was the Chief of Staff to a United States Congressman and then later Manager of Government Affairs for Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. In the early 1980's, I co-founded Vanguard Cellular Systems, Inc., a publicly traded company, which became one of the largest independent cellular systems in the country. I also served as President and CEO of the World USO; the Chief Operating Officer of the 1990 Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations (G-7 Summit) in Houston, Texas; Deputy Commissioner General of the United States for the 1982 World's Fair; President of the Private Sector Council and president of an investment bank. I have also served on boards of some of the world's largest companies.

Finally as a United States Senator from Nebraska for twelve years, I have a legislative record of continuing and unwavering support for our military and our national security. I have voted to authorize the use of military force and I have questioned the military and foreign policy decisions of our leaders. I believe this experience has prepared me to make the tough decisions

and to know that I am accountable for those decisions.

(4) Priorities

If confirmed, you will confront a range of critical issues relating to threats to national security and ensuring that the Armed Forces are prepared to deal with these threats.

In your view, what are the major challenges confronting the next Secretary of Defense?

The next Secretary of Defense will be confronted with a myriad of challenges stemming from an ever more complex global environment. Some of the challenges we know today, but many will continue to unfold as we conclude over ten years at war and look to the future of our military posture. In an ever changing world with both state and non-state actors developing non-traditional tools of war, the United States will be challenged by technological advancements that bring the battlefield to both space and cyberspace. Terrorist organizations continue to proliferate throughout the world and have a significant presence in places such as Yemen, Somalia and North Africa, areas that pose great risk for regional stability. With the ever present threat of Iran, the next Secretary of Defense must be vigilant in pursuing the goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and must maintain our unshakeable commitment to Israel's security. As the United States begins to rebalance to the Asia Pacific region, the Department will be faced by new challenges in this vital part of the world. Piracy, maritime security, disaster relief efforts and of course, continued vigilance to terrorism and proliferation of nuclear weapons name just a few known challenges. All of these things come while the United States is fighting its own battles at home to take care of its service men and women returning from over ten decades of war with rising medical costs and advanced medical conditions. Keeping the faith with our military men and women must remain a high priority to ensure the military itself stays as strong and faithful as its parts. While these are some of the few challenges we know, there are far too many that are not yet apparent. We must be prepared for any contingency we may face in the coming years all while doing so in the confines of this austere budget environment.

Assuming you are confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges?

If confirmed, I plan to work with the President, Congress, and with senior civilian and military leaders of the Department of Defense to come up with comprehensive plans to address each issue. No single issue will have a single simple answer. This will be an iterative process that will employ the full force of Government. It will necessitate strong relationships I plan to maintain and strengthen with our Allies and Partners throughout the globe. We will define our post-2014 presence in Afghanistan and create a new relationship and partnership with Afghanistan. To counter terrorism, we will look into how we use our special operations forces and the development of new technologies and surveillance techniques. As long as nuclear weapons exist, we must maintain a safe, secure and effective nuclear arsenal to deter any adversary. I am committed to considering all options to counter Iran and its aggression, and to maintain U.S. support for missile defense systems in Israel. With the rebalance to the Asia

Pacific, our training and specializations will change as the battlefield and necessary skills of our servicemembers change. As our troops transition out of over tens years of war, I will look at the services available for our men and women, both those that continue to serve and those that transition to civilian life. If confirmed, I plan to continue the work of Secretary Panetta to address issues of the force, such as the unthinkable problem of sexual assault within our ranks. I will continue the implementation of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the opening of positions to women. I will give great attention to all issues that confront our country and our military to ensure the reputation and strength of the United States.

If confirmed, what broad priorities would you establish in terms of issues which must be addressed by the Secretary of Defense?

If confirmed, it would be a priority to ensure the stable transition out of Afghanistan in the next few years, to maintain U.S. military and technological superiority against enemies both known and unknown and to keep the faith with our men and women in the military standing guard to protect this great and vibrant country.

(5) Chain of Command

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Section 163(a) of title 10 further provides that the President may direct communications to combatant commanders be transmitted through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and may assign duties to the Chairman to assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in performing their command function.

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

I believe that having a clear and effective chain of command is essential to successful military operations, and that these provisions of law lay the foundation for such a chain of command.

In your view, do these provisions enhance or degrade civilian control of the military?

In my view, these provisions significantly enhance civilian control by codifying the placement of the President, as Commander-in-Chief, and his principal assistant for military matters, the Secretary of Defense, where they can best exercise civilian control of the military: in the top two positions of the military chain of command.

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

I believe that all military forces normally should operate under the chain of command established under section 162 of title 10, United States Code. However, in certain sensitive operations a temporary exception to that chain of command may be appropriate. I understand

that only the President may approve such an exception and the President retains overall command responsibility, as also recognized in section 162. Any military personnel supporting such sensitive operations remain accountable to the military chain of command, including the Uniform Code of Military Justice. If confirmed, I will provide the President with my best advice regarding any operation where an exception to the established chain of command may be appropriate.

(6) Advice of the Service Chiefs and the Combatant Commanders

Section 151 of title 10, United States Code, provides, in part, that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the principal military adviser to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense and that if any member of the Joint Chiefs submits to the Chairman advice or an opinion, in disagreement with, or advice or an opinion in addition to, the advice presented by the Chairman, the Chairman shall present that advice or opinion at the same time he provides his own advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. Section 163 of title 10, United States Code, provides that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serves as the spokesman for the combatant commanders, especially on the operational requirements of their commands.

What changes in law, if any, do you think may be necessary to ensure that the views of the individual Service Chiefs and of the combatant commanders are presented and considered?

If confirmed, I will welcome and carefully consider the advice of the individual members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Combatant Commanders. I believe that the current law provides ample authority for such a close, advisory process. If I find in the future that changes may enhance this process, I will work with the Department and Congress to implement those changes.

What is your view on the appropriate role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

The Chief of the National Guard Bureau brings an important perspective to the Joint Chiefs and to the Department on matters affecting the National Guard. In my view, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau should fulfill his duty as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a manner consistent with the laws governing the role of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

(7) Use of Military Force

The question as to whether and when U.S. forces should participate in potentially dangerous situations is one of the most important and difficult decisions that the national command authorities have to make. Prior Secretaries of Defense and Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have proposed criteria to guide decision-making for such situations.

What factors would you consider in making recommendations to the President on the use of force?

Committing our troops to any military operation is a grave decision, and one I, if confirmed, would make carefully and cautiously. In making a recommendation to the President on the use of military force, I would consider all the factors previous Secretaries of Defense have identified. These would include: national interest and strategic objectives; domestic and international legal basis for action; our ability to achieve our objectives and achieve a successful outcome through use of force; the unique need for military force and alternative means, particularly non-military, for achieving our interests; the risks to our other interests and our force; and the sufficiency of sustained public support for use of force.

What circumstances should pertain for you to recommend that the President employ preemptive force?

The United States must reserve the right, consistent with longstanding principles of self-defense, to use military force if intelligence or other information clearly demonstrates that force is necessary to prevent or blunt an imminent attack on the United States or an ally. If confirmed, in advising the President regarding the use of force to preempt an attack, I would consider such factors as: the nature and immediacy of the threat; the probability of an attack; whether a pattern of activity demonstrates the intent of an actor to carry out an attack; the likely scale of the attack and the injury, loss, or damage likely to result absent preemptive action; and the likelihood that there will be other opportunities to undertake effective action in self-defense. I would also ensure that, if force is determined to be necessary, we adhere to standards that govern the use of force and work to strengthen our legitimacy in taking action, including seeking broader international support.

What degree of certainty do you believe is necessary before the United States would use preemptive force?

Any decision to use preemptive force must be informed by the best available intelligence regarding the threat that is to be countered. There should always be a sound factual basis for concluding that force is necessary to protect the United States or an ally from attack. If confirmed, I would examine the underlying intelligence critically as such a decision must not be taken lightly. I do not believe, however, that it is necessary that we know the precise timing, location, or nature of the hostile attack as a prerequisite to using force to counter or stop an attack on the United States or an ally.

(8) National Security Budget Reductions

Part 1 of the Budget Control Act (BCA) enacted on August 2, 2011 established budget caps designed to realize \$917 billion in budget savings in federal discretionary spending over the period from fiscal year 2012 to fiscal year 2021. As a result, the administration's DoD current budget plan for fiscal years 2012 to 2021 is \$487 billion lower

than the \$6.14 trillion it had projected a year earlier for the same ten-year period. This reduction amounts to nearly 8 percent compared to the previous plan.

Do you believe that defense spending reductions of this magnitude (absent a sequester) can be accomplished without significant adverse impact on our national security?

Based on my review to date, my answer is yes. I believe the Department's strategy can be accomplished within the constraints of the Budget Control Act. But only if the Department has to retain the flexibility to adjust the size of its forces and infrastructure, and take steps to control its costs, in accordance with the Administration's present strategy and budget.

How would you assess the national military strategy to deal with the changed budget environment?

I believe the Department has taken a hard look at the new security environment and developed a strategy that appropriately allocates reduced defense resources to the highest priority needs and ensures our national security objectives are met. If confirmed, I will further assess the strategy according to changes in the security environment and continued fiscal pressure.

What are the standards by which you will measure the adequacy of DOD funding, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I would measure the adequacy of Department of Defense funding by its ability to ensure that the Department is able to meet the country's security challenges and preserve the strongest military in the world.

If confirmed, in this era of budget austerity, how will you prioritize the objectives of completing the mission in Afghanistan, re-setting of the force, investing in the future force, and meeting ongoing operational commitments around the world?

Right now, I believe the Department can implement the Administration's present strategy, which carefully balances the above objectives. I understand that the immediate needs of completing the mission in Afghanistan and ongoing operational commitments cannot jeopardize resetting the force and investing in our future. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that budget decisions are made carefully so that we maintain a healthy balance among those near-term and longer-term objectives. I will continue to refine the Department's spending in line with the priorities of the President's strategic objectives. However, if multi-year reductions in funding take place (such as those required by sequestration), the Department would need to significantly revise the defense strategy and, in all probability, would need to make some hard choices about which of our current national defense capabilities we could afford to retain.

(9) Readiness of the Armed Forces

The Joint Chiefs recently stated that "the readiness of our Armed Forces is at a tipping point. We are on the brink of creating a hollow force due to an unprecedented

convergence of budget conditions and legislation that could require the Department to retain more forces than requested while underfunding that force's readiness."

How do you currently assess the readiness of the Armed Forces?

I am deeply impressed by the caliber and capabilities of our military forces. It is vitally important that they be ready to respond to the nation's needs, and I am concerned that further budget cuts will negatively affect readiness. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the readiness of the force.

Do you agree with the Joint Chiefs that readiness is at tipping point?

Maintaining ready forces is a priority, and I am concerned by the Joint Chiefs' assessment. If confirmed, I will work with the Joint Chiefs to better understand the basis of their assessment and how we can most effectively address the readiness challenges our military faces.

If confirmed, how would you assess the impact of budget conditions on the issue expressed by the Joint Chiefs of a hollow force?

My sense is that the concerns the Joint Chiefs have expressed about readiness come from a variety of factors, including the challenges of recovering from ten years of operational stress, of transitioning to a broader range of operations, and of doing all of this in the face of fiscal austerity and budget uncertainty. If confirmed, I will carefully monitor how all of these factors are posing risks to readiness and will work closely with the military and civilian leadership of the Department to mitigate those risks to the greatest extent possible.

How would you define a hollow force?

A hollow force is one that has been rendered incapable of performing the mission that we expect it to conduct. With a hollow force, units do not have the resources, personnel, equipment, and training necessary to make them capable or ready to execute the defense strategies that secure our country.

(10) Budget Uncertainly and Sequestration

The Department of Defense is currently facing budget uncertainty due to the fact that it is operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) through at least March 27, 2013 and due to the possibility that, absent a budget deal, the BCA will require a sequester of security funding totaling more than \$40 billion starting on March 1, 2013. DOD officials have noted that, if CR is extended through the end of the current fiscal year, in its current form, readiness would suffer. They have also noted that a sequester could seriously threaten our ability to implement our current defense strategy. Secretary Panetta has stated that a sequester would have a "devastating" impact on the Department of Defense.

What is your understanding of the impact a full-year continuing resolution would have on

the Department of Defense?

A year-long CR reduces the Department's funding flexibility by putting it into a straightjacket, spending money on last year's priorities not this year's. Continuing resolutions force the Department to operate inefficiently because it does not know what projects will be funded or at what level of funding. The money provided in the continuing resolution does not provide sufficient funding in the right places, particularly critical operating accounts which could harm military readiness. In addition, continuing resolutions generally push the Department to use month-to-month contracts and prohibits doing "new starts" in military construction or acquisition programs, which leads to inefficiency and backlogs in contracting.

What do you believe would be the impact on the Department of Defense of a full sequester in FY 2013?

As Secretary Panetta has repeatedly stated, sequestration – both the size and the arbitrary manner of these cuts – would be devastating to the Department. It would harm military readiness and disrupt each and every investment program. Based on my assessment to date, I share his concerns. I urge the Congress to eliminate the sequester threat permanently and pass a balanced deficit-reduction plan. Impacts of sequester could include the need to revise the defense strategy, fewer day-to-day global activities reducing our presence and partnerships, less training including cuts to flying and steaming hours which would reduce readiness, near universal disruption of investment including 2,500 procurement programs, research projects, and military construction; reduced and delayed weapons system buys with resulting price increases, furloughs and hiring freezes for civilian workers resulting in reduced maintenance of weapons systems, oversight of contracts and financial systems; negative effects on morale and welfare of the force including recruiting and retention problems.

What is your understanding of the impact that the combination of a full-year continuing resolution and a sequester would have on the readiness of the Armed Forces?

It is my understanding that under this scenario, the Department would be forced to cut over \$40B from our budget in a little over half a year, using a mechanistic formula to do it. It would result in 20% cuts in the Department's operating budgets. As the Joint Chiefs have warned, such cuts, if allowed to occur, would damage our readiness, our people, and our military families. It would result in the grounding of aircraft and returning ships to port, reducing the Department's global presence and ability to rapidly respond to contingencies. Vital training would be reduced by half of current plans and the Department would be unable to reset equipment from Afghanistan in a timely manner. The Department would reduce training and maintenance for non-deploying units and would be forced to reduce procurement of vital weapons systems and suffer the subsequent schedule delays and price increases. Civilian employees would be furloughed for up to 22 days. All of these effects also negatively impact long-term readiness. It would send a terrible signal to our military and civilian workforce, to those we hope to recruit, and to both our allies and adversaries around the world.

If confirmed what role would you play toward enacting a FY 2013 Defense Appropriations

Bill and avoiding a sequester?

If confirmed, I would continue to urge the Congress to pass a full-year appropriations bill for the Department of Defense and for other federal agencies so that the Department and other federal agencies may be run efficiently, with the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, as the taxpayers expect and deserve.

(11) Financial Management and Business Transformation

The Department of Defense spends billions of dollars every year to acquire, operate and upgrade business systems needed to support the warfighter, including systems related to the management of contracts, finances, the supply chain, and support infrastructure. Despite these expenditures, the Department's business systems are stovepiped, duplicative and non-integrated. Also, the Department's ability to leverage these systems to transform how it conducts its business missions has been frustrated by its resistance to re-engineering its business processes effectively. As a result, the Department remains unable to produce timely, accurate and complete information to support management decisions. For this reason, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has identified defense financial management and business transformation as exposing taxpayer dollars to a "high risk" of waste, fraud, and abuse.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that the financial management and business transformation problems of the Department of Defense receive priority attention at the senior management level and throughout the defense enterprise?

Improving financial management capability is very important, especially in light of the fiscal challenges facing the Department and the country. I understand plans exist to continue the improvement of the Department's business processes and, if confirmed, I will ensure that senior leadership – including the Chief Financial Officer, the Deputy Chief Management Officer, and the Chief Information Officer – focus appropriate attention on this effort by holding them accountable for progress against these plans.

Do you support the objective of having the Department achieve an auditable financial statement by the end of fiscal year 2017?

Yes. I support the effort and will maintain the Department's commitment to producing audit-ready financial statements by the congressional deadline of September 2017, with an audit beginning by the end of calendar year 2017.

What steps would you take if the Department fails to reach this goal?

I would want to evaluate the nature of the problem, the reasons the goal was not met, and the remediation options available to get the Department back on track before determining the actions to be taken.

Do you support the objective of having the Department achieve an auditable statement of budgetary resources by the end of fiscal year 2014?

Yes, I agree with current priorities that focus first on the budgetary information most useful in managing the Department. I understand there is a plan to ensure the budgetary statement is ready to be audited by September 2014.

What steps would you take if the Department fails to reach this goal?

I understand the plan to meet that deadline has received a very high priority at all levels of the Department, and if confirmed, I would sustain this as a high priority and hold senior leadership accountable for reaching this goal. If problems are encountered that would put this goal at risk, I would evaluate the nature of the problem, the reasons the goal was not met, and the remediation options available to get the Department back on track. I would also ensure that Congress is kept apprised of the Department's progress.

(12) Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Collaboration

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have in recent years increased collaboration between the respective departments to support service members as they transition to veteran status. This support includes access to health and mental health care, improved disability evaluation, and coordination of compensation and other benefits.

If confirmed, what role would you expect to play in ensuring that the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs achieve the Administration's objectives in DOD and VA collaboration?

I have been working to improve the transition of our servicemembers to civilian life for most of my life. If confirmed, I am looking forward to taking a very active role in this area. The Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki is a longtime friend and if confirmed, I will continue the close partnership with him that has existed under Secretaries Gates and Panetta. I will continue the practice of holding regular Secretarial-level meetings and will closely monitor the progress of the many important joint initiatives between the two Departments.

(13) Systems and Support for Wounded Warriors

Service members who are wounded or injured in combat operations deserve the highest priority from their Service for support services, healing and recuperation, rehabilitation, evaluation for return to duty, successful transition from active duty if required, and continuing support beyond retirement or discharge. Yet, as the revelations at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in 2007 illustrated, the Services were not prepared to meet the needs of significant numbers of returning wounded service members. Despite the enactment of legislation and renewed emphasis, many challenges remain, including a growing population of service members awaiting disability evaluation.

What is your assessment of the progress made to date by the Department of Defense and the Services to improve the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured service members and their families?

I believe that important progress in the care, management, and transition of seriously ill and injured servicemembers has been made in the years since the revelations at WRAMC, though there is more work to be done. It will be a top priority to ensure the best quality care for our seriously ill and injured servicemembers and their families. My understanding is Secretary Panetta directed a detailed review of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System. If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to reviewing the details of that effort. I will also work closely with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs programs are fully complementary and that wounded servicemembers experience a seamless system of care as they transition to veteran status.

What are the strengths upon which continued progress should be based?

My understanding is that significant progress has been made in linking an individual with their medical record in a central data repository, and making this information available to any Department of Defense medical treatment facility or Veterans Affairs facility. This appears to provide seamless health care to our members. If confirmed, I will continue to partner with the VA in this area. Although I believe there is more work to be done in improving the care of our seriously ill and injured servicemembers and their families, this issue is a top priority of the senior leadership of the Department and a strength that I will continue to build on. I will also look to build on the close collaboration between the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in caring for our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

What are the weaknesses that need to be corrected?

One weakness is the lack of sufficient mental health care providers at both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs. While this is mostly a function of the overall shortage of people with this specialty, I know the Defense Department is working hard to address this problem, through increased funding and recruitment. Another weakness that I am aware of is that Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense have multiple caregivers, overwhelming patients and their families. I understand Secretary Panetta and Secretary Shinseki signed an agreement to help wounded warriors navigate through our systems, by naming a lead care coordinator for each wounded warrior. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the implementation of this agreement and work to improve upon it. There is also duplication and overlap in the various services and care programs provided by the Department, the military services, and Veterans Affairs, and I would want to make sure that all such programs are fully coordinated, easily accessible, and comprehensible for our wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers and their families.

If confirmed, are there additional strategies and resources that you would pursue to increase support for wounded service members and their families, and to monitor their

progress in returning to duty or to civilian life?

If confirmed, I would look to build on innovative programs and partnerships - both with other federal agencies, as well as with state and local governments and private and community organizations - that support our wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers and their families. For instance, the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund has added invaluable to the care and treatment of servicemembers and veterans with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and psychological health issues through the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, and they are in the process of building state-of-the-art satellite treatment centers at nine of DoD's largest installations. I am also heartened by cross-agency efforts like the \$100M investment announced last year by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to improve diagnosis and treatment of mild TBI and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of access to care and care management for federal civilian employees who are ill or injured in theater, including evaluation and response to traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress?

My understanding is that federal civilian employees who are injured or ill in theater have been treated by theater military treatment facilities just as active duty members would be. Once medically evacuated out of theater, depending on their medical needs, they are transferred to an appropriate civilian institution. If confirmed, I would seek to ensure that federal civilian employees in theater receive the quality care and care management befitting those who put themselves in harm's way on behalf of the nation.

Studies conducted as a result of the revelations at WRAMC pointed to the need to reform the disability evaluation system (DES). The Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) was established to integrate the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs disability systems to improve and expedite processing of service members through the disability evaluation system.

What is your assessment of the need to further streamline and improve the IDES?

While the introduction of the joint Integrated Disability Evaluation System has on the whole been an improvement over the separate Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs legacy systems, there is still much room for further improvement, particularly with regard to timeliness. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to press forward, in close collaboration with Veterans Affairs, with further improvements to the IDES.

If confirmed, how will you address any need for change, particularly the Army's problem with an increasing number of Soldiers who are not medically fit for deployment, but who remain on active duty while they process through the lengthy IDES process?

I am aware that this is an issue, particularly for the Army. I do not have specific recommendations at this time, but if confirmed, I will work with the leadership of the military services on ways that we can better balance the need to provide servicemembers with a timely

and fair disability evaluation with the need to maintain acceptable levels of deployable personnel.

(14) Homosexual Conduct Policy

The law commonly referred to as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was repealed effective September 20, 2011. As part of the implementation of this repeal, the Secretary of Defense appointed a benefits review group to conduct a review of all potential benefits that could be made available to same-sex spouses. The report of this review group is long overdue and has been repeatedly delayed.

What is your view of the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell?”

I fully support the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and value the service of all those who fight for our country. I fully support gay and lesbian men and women serving openly in the U.S. military and am committed to a full implementation of the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

What is your assessment of the implementation of the repeal of this law?

I understand that the senior military leadership have engaged in a year-long monitoring process and found that repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" has not had any impacts on readiness, effectiveness, unit cohesion, recruiting, and retention. At the same time, I realize that there is still some work to be done to achieve the full implementation of repeal, particularly with regard to the benefits available to the families of gay and lesbian service members.

What is the status of the report of the benefits review group? When is this group expected to issue its report?

I understand that this review is not taking the form of a report, per se, but has involved assembling detailed information on individual benefits (including whether each such benefit might be made available under current law, and options for how to do so) to support decision making by the senior civilian and military leadership of the Department, and also that those decisions are currently under active consideration. If confirmed, I will review the work that has been undertaken during the course of the benefits review and will work closely with the Department of Defense civilian and military leadership to move forward expeditiously on this issue.

What is your view on the issue of providing military benefits to same-sex partners?

As I have stated previously, I fully support the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” and value the service of all those who fight for our country. If confirmed, I will do everything possible to the extent permissible under current law to provide equal benefits to the families of all our servicemembers.

If confirmed, will you ensure that completion of the report of the Benefits Review Group is expedited and provided to Congress?

If confirmed, I will work closely with the Department of Defense civilian and military leadership to move forward expeditiously on this issue and will inform the appropriate Congressional committees of decisions as they are made.

(15) Religious Guidelines

The Independent Review Related to the Tragedy at Fort Hood observed that “DOD policy regarding religious accommodation lacks the clarity necessary to help commanders distinguish appropriate religious practices from those that might indicate a potential for violence or self-radicalization.” Recommendation 2.7 of the Final Recommendations urged the Department to update policy to clarify guidelines for religious accommodation and Recommendation 2.8 urged the Department to task the Defense Science Board to “undertake a multi-disciplinary study to identify behavioral indicators of violence and self-radicalization”

What is your view of these recommendations?

Ensuring appropriate accommodations for the free exercise of religions and protecting servicemembers from violence and harm are both of vital importance. It is my understanding that, pursuant to Recommendation 2.7, the Department updated its policy on religious accommodation to ensure religious freedoms and practices are accommodated to the fullest extent possible considering mission readiness, discipline and unit cohesion. Regarding Recommendation 2.8, the Department did task the Defense Science Board (DSB) to undertake a study. The DSB recently completed their study and found that it could not determine a specific list of behaviors that would indicate risk of violent/extremist behavior. If I am confirmed, I will review the implementation of the recommendations of the Fort Hood Review.

What is your understanding of current policies and programs of the Department of Defense regarding religious practices in the military?

It is my understanding that policies and programs of the Department of Defense regarding religious practices in the military seek to ensure servicemembers’ rights to observe the tenets of their respective religions, as well as to hold no specific religious conviction or affiliation.

In your view, do these policies appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion and other beliefs without impinging on those who have different beliefs, including no religious belief?

Yes, in my view, current policies appropriately accommodate the free exercise of religion for all servicemembers in the pluralistic environment that is the U.S. military. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor and assess these policies.

In your view, do existing policies and practices regarding public prayers offered by military chaplains in a variety of formal and informal settings strike the proper balance between a chaplain's ability to pray in accordance with his or her religious beliefs and the rights of other service members with different beliefs, including no religious beliefs?

It is my understanding that existing policies provide the military chaplains with sufficient guidance that allows them to balance, in both formal and informal settings, their own faith practices with the rights of others who may hold different or no religious beliefs. I recognize that this at times can be a difficult balance to achieve, and if confirmed, I would work with the civilian and military leadership of the Department and with the Congress to ensure the Department of Defense continues to do so.

If confirmed, will you work to ensure that a scientific fact-based approach to understanding radicalization will drive the Department's relevant policies on this topic?

Yes. If confirmed, I would review the Department's existing policies and its plans to address these challenges and determine what, if any, changes should be made. I agree that any changes to how the Department approaches this issue should be based on a solid scientific and factual foundation.

Current policy in the Department gives discretion to military leaders to decide whether requests to waive uniform and appearance standards should be granted based on religious beliefs.

In your view, do DOD policies appropriately accommodate religious practices that require adherents to wear items of religious apparel?

It is my understanding that current policies allow for consideration of accommodations of religious apparel that do not interfere with the performance of military duties. If confirmed, I would work with the military services to ensure that they strike the right balance between military uniform and appearance standards and personal religious practices.

(16) Muslims in the U. S. Military

Are you concerned that the attack at Fort Hood could lead to harassment or even violence against Muslims in the military?

The attack at Fort Hood was a tragedy. It is essential that the circumstances surrounding the attack not compromise the military's core values regarding the free exercise of religion and treating every servicemember with dignity and respect. Each servicemember has the right to practice his or her religious faith without fear of persecution or retribution.

If confirmed, what strategies would you advocate to address the potential for harassment or violence against Muslims in the U. S. military?

If confirmed, I will not tolerate harassment or mistreatment against Muslims in the military, or against any servicemember based on their religious faith. This sort of behavior or any form of cruelty and maltreatment is inconsistent with the military's core values, detracts from combat capability, and has no place in the armed forces. I will expect commanders and leaders at all levels to maintain an environment that promotes dignity and respect, and will hold them accountable for preventing harassment or mistreatment.

(17) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response

Sexual assaults continue to be a significant issue in the military. Victims of sexual assault report that they are victimized twice: first by attackers in their own ranks and then by unresponsive or inadequate treatment for the victim and failure of the chain of command to hold assailants accountable. The Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies released in December, 2012, documents that, while the military academies are in compliance with Department of Defense policies, sexual assault and harassment remain a problem in each academy. Sexual assaults continue to be a persistent problem in the services, as evidenced by the ongoing prosecutions of military training instructors for sexual misconduct with trainees at Air Force basic training at Lackland Air Force Base. Secretary Panetta has recently announced several new initiatives to address the sexual assault problems in the military, including comprehensive assessments of initial training of enlisted personnel and officers, creation of special victim capabilities, and limiting initial disposition authority to Special Court-Martial Convening Authorities in the grade of O-6 or higher.

What is your assessment of the Department's policies for prevention and response to sexual assaults in the military?

Sexual assault will absolutely not be tolerated in the Department of Defense. It is a direct affront to the military's core value to protect all members of the Armed Forces. Current levels of sexual assault are unacceptably high. I know that the Department has put considerable effort into the development and implementation of new policies and procedures to prevent the crime of sexual assault, support victims, and hold offenders appropriately accountable. But I also know that more needs to be done. Secretary Panetta and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have made this issue a top priority. If confirmed, will do the same, and ensure that the Department continues its commitment to address sexual assault in a comprehensive and persistent manner.

What is your view of the steps the Services have taken to prevent and respond to sexual assaults in combat zones, including assaults against contractor personnel?

I do not have enough information to make a comprehensive assessment of sexual assault prevention and response in deployed environments at this time. It is my understanding that any deployed personnel who are victims, whether servicemembers, civilians, or contractors, receive appropriate emergency medical care and support. I also firmly believe that there must be strict

accountability for those who perpetrate such assaults in deployed areas. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to address sexual assault in a comprehensive manner – across all services, in all locations, and for all personnel.

What is your view of the adequacy of the training and resources the Services have in place to investigate and respond to allegations of sexual assault?

It is my understanding that all services have established guidelines for a 24 hour, 7 day a week sexual assault response capability for victims in all locations, including deployed areas. With regard to investigations, I understand the Department has multiple efforts underway to enhance its ability to investigate and respond to sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic violence. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to sustain and build on these enhanced capabilities for the investigation of “special victim” crimes.

What is your view of the willingness and ability of the Services to hold assailants accountable for their acts?

I strongly believe that anyone who commits a sexual assault in the military needs to be held accountable. The Department has a zero tolerance policy, but that is not enough. Accountability is key. To this end, I fully support Secretary Panetta’s decision to elevate initial disposition of sexual assault cases to the level of Colonel or Navy Captain, or higher. This action helps ensure our more seasoned, senior commanders determine what actions are appropriate in response to allegations of sexual assault. It is my belief that military commanders are essential to making sexual assault prevention and response efforts successful. But in order to hold assailants accountable, we must have victims who are willing to come forward and report these crimes. To do that, victims need to have confidence in our system of military justice. That is why I also look forward to hearing more about the impact of the Air Force’s pilot program assigning an attorney to each victim of sexual assault who requests one to represent them. I believe this could be a very good way to increase the number of victims who are willing to come forward.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure senior level direction and oversight of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual assaults?

If confirmed, I will make sexual assault prevention and response a personal priority and will work closely with the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the Chiefs of the Military Services to ensure that the Department of Defense maintains the current high level of senior leadership focus on this issue.

(18) Increased use of National Guard and Reserves

Over the last two decades, the National Guard and Reserves have experienced their largest and most sustained employment since World War II. Numerous problems have arisen over time in the planning and procedures for mobilization and demobilization, e.g.,

inadequate health screening and medical response to service-connected injuries or illnesses, antiquated pay systems, limited transition assistance programs upon demobilization, and inefficient policies regarding members of the Individual Ready Reserve. Reserve force management policies and systems have been characterized in the past as “inefficient and rigid” and readiness levels have been adversely affected by equipment shortages, cross-leveling, and reset policies. The recently enacted section 12304b of title 10, United States Code, authorizes Service Secretaries to mobilize for up to 365 consecutive days Reserve Component units and individuals in support of pre-planned combatant command missions. Current defense strategy provides for a reduction in conventional ground forces, an increase in special forces, and the establishment of a rotational presence in Europe, the Middle East, and anywhere U.S. interests are threatened. Some in the press have called this a “lily pad” approach, and it potentially dovetails with an operational view of the Reserve components.

What is your assessment of the Reserve and how it will fit into this new strategy of smaller, more lethal forces rotating into and out of many locations of strategic interest?

The Reserves and National Guard have clearly proven the ability to accomplish any assigned mission overseas or at home. They will continue to play a vital role as we move out of the past decade of war in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Department shapes the force to implement the new defense strategy and to respond to the challenges of a new era.

What is your understanding of the appropriate size and makeup of the reserve components in light of the current defense strategy?

I understand that questions about the size and makeup of the Active and Reserve Components are currently under consideration as the Department continues to implement the new defense strategy and respond to the current fiscal environment. If confirmed, I will work closely with the services and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to determine the most effective mix and makeup of Active, Reserve, and Guard personnel to support the defense strategy.

What is your assessment of advances made in improving reserve and guard component mobilization and demobilization procedures, and in what areas do problems still exist?

I understand that there have been many advances made in policies and procedures governing the utilization of the Guard and Reserves, as well as advancing the pre and post active duty benefits. These have given Reserve Component personnel the ability to plan for periods of utilization followed by substantial time performing inactive duty at home. This provides a predictable cycle of active duty and increases readiness by utilizing the Reserve Components on a more regular basis. If confirmed, I will ensure these procedures are continually assessed to ensure they are providing the Reserve Components the support they need and deserve.

What do you consider to be the most significant enduring changes to the enabling of an operational reserve aimed at ensuring reserve component and guard readiness for future

mobilization requirements?

In my view, the most significant and enduring change in this area has been the use of the Reserve Component as a full partner in the overall force at large. In particular, the experience and skills that members of the Reserve Component have gained from preparing and deploying over the past decade have notably increased the overall readiness of the Reserve Component, and the Department will continue to make use of these enhanced skills and readiness in the future.

Do you see a need to modify current statutory authorities for the mobilization of members of the National Guard and Reserves or to further enhance their ability to perform various national security missions?

I appreciate Congress' willingness in the FY12 NDAA to increase authorities to fully use the Reserves as a rotational force. If confirmed, I will consider this question in light of the new strategy, but at the present time I believe that appropriate policies and procedures are in place and no laws need to be changed.

(19) Dwell Time

While dwell time is improving as our forces draw down in Afghanistan, many active duty military members are still not experiencing the dwell time goal of 2 years at home for every year deployed.

In your view, when will the active component dwell time goal be met?

I understand that all of the services, on average, are meeting or exceeding the Department's dwell time goal of 2 years at home for every year deployed, or 1:2, for the Active Component. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor this issue closely.

When will dwell time objectives be met for the reserve components?

I understand Reserve Component dwell time is improving, but has not reached the Department's dwell time goal of 5 years at home for every one year of active duty, or 1:5. If confirmed, I will continue to work toward the goal of a 1:5 dwell time ratio for the Reserve Component for all of the Services.

(20) Active-Duty and Reserve Component End Strength

The Department last year announced its 5-year plan to reduce active-duty end strengths by over 100,000 service members by 2017, and the reserve components by another 21,000 over the same period. These cuts do not include any additional personnel reductions that could result from sequestration or any agreement to avoid sequestration.

Do you agree with this plan to reduce active-duty and reserve component end strengths?

If confirmed, I will review the plan, but I believe that we must be able to balance end-strength, readiness, and modernization. The end strength drawdown allows us to achieve the right size force and keep it modern. The plan is designed to maintain capable and ready military forces while managing reductions in a way that “keeps faith” with servicemembers who have been at war for the past ten years. While the plan will reduce active-duty end strength by 100,000, I believe the Department has scaled back the reserve component cut to less than 21,000 (17,000). Preserving the Guard and Reserve reduces the risk of reductions and hedges against uncertainty by providing capacity and capability that can be called up if needed. As future national security conditions change, the Department’s planned drawdown could change accordingly.

What is your view of how these planned end-strength reductions will affect dwell time ratios?

The Army and Marine Corps end strength reductions are synchronized with plans for the drawdown in Afghanistan. The Department’s dwell time goal is 1:2 active, 1:5 for Reserves. With some exceptions, the current dwell is 1:1 Active, 1:5 Reserve. If the Afghanistan force drawdown stays on track, the duty/dwell ratio goal for components should be achieved. If confirmed, I will carefully monitor the dwell time of our servicemembers since it is critical that dwell times be sufficient to preserve the wellbeing of our force.

What effect would inability to meet dwell time objectives have on your decision to implement the planned end-strength reductions?

Preserving the All-Volunteer Force is a top priority, so it is important to avoid stressing the Active and Reserve components. If confirmed, I would assess our ability to achieve our strategic missions and dwell time objectives prior to and during implementation of the planned Army and Marine Corps strength reductions.

What additional military personnel reductions do you envision if the Department were required to sequester funding as outlined in the Budget Control Act?

The President notified Congress of his intent to exempt all military personnel accounts from sequester for FY 2013, if a sequester is necessary. However, if the Department were required to sequester funding, I believe that it would first require a revision of the Defense Strategic Guidance announced by the President last January. The current strategy could not be met with the significantly diminished resources that sequester would impose. The revised strategy could very well impact all components of our workforce –government civilians and contractors in the near term as well as Active Duty and Reserve Component military if the sequester continues beyond Fiscal Year 2013.

In your view, what tools do the Department and Services need to get down to authorized strengths in the future, and which of these require Congressional authorization?

The workforce management tools that Congress provided in the FY13 NDAA will be useful for the drawdown. The Department continues to examine whether other workforce management authorities are needed and will submit those to Congress as necessary. In addition, in the event that the Department has to sequester funding, the Department would likely revisit the size of all components of the workforce – Active Duty military, Reserve Component military, government civilians and contractors. After such a review, the Department might require, and would then request, additional authorization for tools to meet reduced end strength goals.

(21) Recruiting Standards

Recruiting highly qualified individuals for military service during wartime in a cost-constrained environment presents unique challenges.

What is your assessment of the adequacy of current standards regarding qualifications for enlistment in the Armed Forces?

Today's enlistment qualification standards are well-defined, supported by years of experience, and have stood the test of time. They are driven by the need to provide the services with men and women who are prepared to adapt to the rigors of military life and meet performance requirements. The adequacy of these standards is evidenced by over 11 years of continuous armed conflict manned by a high quality all-volunteer force.

In your view, is there any way to increase the pool of eligible enlistees without sacrificing quality?

My understanding is the services are always exploring ways to improve their ability to expand the recruiting market without sacrificing quality. As an example, this year the Department expanded its ability to enlist graduates with alternative diplomas while minimizing first term attrition. The services also may be able to augment their screening procedures by incorporating other measures, such as temperament, to identify applicants who are likely to adapt well to the military. If confirmed, I will work with the services to continually find new ways to expand the recruit market.

(22) Women in the Military

The issue of the appropriate role of women in the armed forces is a matter of continuing interest to Congress and the American public. Last year, the Department of Defense released a report to Congress, required by section 535 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 (Public Law 111-383), reviewing the laws and policies restricting the service of female members of the armed forces, and provided notice to Congress that the Department would open positions in ground combat units at the battalion level to women in occupational specialties for which they are already qualified to serve, and would eliminate the so-called co-location policy. According to the report, the

changes resulted in over 14,000 positions being opened to women that were previously denied. Since then, the Marine Corps opened training positions at its Infantry Officer course to female marines, and the Army recently announced opening some special operation aviation positions to female service members.

What is your view of the appropriate role for women in the armed forces?

Women are indispensable to our military. They have served ably alongside their male counterparts in Iraq and Afghanistan in a variety of roles. I support the expansion of opportunities for women to serve. If confirmed, I will ensure that the process of opening previously closed positions takes place expeditiously and at the same time that our readiness and ability to defend the nation are not compromised by these changes.

Do you believe additional specialties should be opened up for service by women? If so, which specialties?

On January 24, 2013, Secretary Panetta rescinded the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule and directed the integration of women into previously closed positions by January 1, 2016. If confirmed, I will continue implementation of that new policy, including its emphasis on the effectiveness of the fighting force and the development of gender-neutral standards.

Do you believe any changes in the current policy or legislation regarding women in combat are needed or warranted?

I am not aware of further necessary changes at this time. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the implementation of the January 24, 2013 policy and if I see that additional policies or legislation are needed, I will make recommendations.

(23) Rising Costs of Medical Care

In testimony presented to Congress in February, 2009, the Assistant Director of the Congressional Budget Office asserted that “medical funding accounts for more than one-third of the growth projected for operations and support funding between 2009 and 2026.” In April, 2009, Secretary Gates told an audience at Maxwell Air Force Base that “health care is eating the Department alive.” In recent years, the Department has attempted to address the growth in overall health care costs through various fee increases on military retirees.

What reforms in infrastructure, benefits, or benefit management, if any, do you think should be examined in order to control the costs of military health care?

It is essential that the Department take steps to control the costs of military healthcare while ensuring it continues to provide for our military personnel, their families, and retirees. I understand the Department included proposals in the FY 2012 and 2013 President’s Budgets that

would slow the growth of healthcare costs while preserving the quality and range of health care. These proposals include increasing enrollment fees and deductibles for retirees and increasing pharmacy co-pays. Not many of these proposals were accepted by Congress. If confirmed, I will review initiatives in this area and look for further opportunities as we must continue to look for savings in this area.

What is your assessment of the long-term impact of rising medical costs on future Department of Defense plans?

As I understand the situation, health care consumes nearly 10% of the Department's budget and could grow considerably over the next decade, taking an ever larger bite out of our ability to invest in enhanced war fighting capability. However, I realize that the healthcare benefit is a key component of retention for our men and women in uniform so I will work closely with the military and civilian leadership in the Department to find reasonable and responsible ways to stem this growth without breaking faith with our service members, their families, and retirees.

If confirmed, what actions would you initiate or recommend to mitigate the effect of such costs on the DOD top-line?

I cannot make specific recommendations at this time. If confirmed, I am committed to continuing to review military health care. Any changes must keep the faith with our troops, be transparent, preserve the quality and range of health care, and protect wounded warriors, medically-retired, and the families of those who died on active duty. Given today's budget environment, we must continue to look for savings opportunities, and this should include military health care.

(24) Personnel and Entitlement Costs

In addition to health care costs, personnel and related entitlement spending continues to grow and is becoming an ever increasing portion of the DOD budget.

What actions do you believe can and should be taken, if any, to control the rise in personnel costs and entitlement spending?

I understand personnel and entitlement costs make up a significant portion of the Department's budget and have risen sharply over the past ten years. The Department has proposed several initiatives in an attempt to slow the rate of growth while continuing to attract and retain the right number and quality of personnel. If confirmed, I am committed to exploring options to find savings and more efficient alternatives to help control the rise in personnel and entitlement costs while still fully supporting the All-Volunteer Force.

In your view, can the Department and the Services efficiently manage the use of bonuses and special pays to place high quality recruits in the right jobs without paying more than

the Department needs to pay, or can afford to pay, for other elements of the force?

I understand that targeted bonuses and special pays are very effective tools for achieving the Department's personnel strength and quality objectives and are generally much more cost-effective than across-the-board pay increases. Like any compensation program, these tools must be continually monitored to ensure they are used both efficiently and effectively and that the Department is receiving best value for its dollars.

25) Military Compensation and Retirement Commission

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 establishes a commission to review all elements of the military compensation and retirement systems and to make recommendations to modernize those systems to ensure the long-term viability of the all-volunteer force, enable a high quality of life for military families, and to achieve fiscal sustainability for the compensation and retirement systems.

Do you agree with the need for a comprehensive study of the military compensation and retirement systems?

I believe it is appropriate to perform a comprehensive review of the military compensation and retirement systems to ensure we have the right mix of pay and benefits to support our members.

Do you support the goals of the Commission?

Yes. I am committed to ensuring any proposed changes to the mix of pay and benefits keep faith with those who are serving today and with those who have served in the past.

26) Dependent Care and Flexible Spending Accounts

The 10th QRMC recommended providing dependent care and flexible spending benefits to active-duty service members. Providing these benefits would seem consistent with the initiatives of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden on behalf of military families. It would appear that no new legislative authority is needed for the Department to provide these benefits to service members and their families.

If confirmed, would you extend these benefits to the active duty service members and their families?

Taking care of our service members and their families is a top priority of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will examine the option of flexible spending accounts for military families to determine if they are an appropriate part of our extensive benefits package for service members and their families in this time of fiscal austerity.

27) Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Resources

The numbers of suicides in each of the services continues to concern the Committee. The Army released a report in July 2010 that analyzed the causes of its growing suicide rate and examined disturbing trends in drug use, disciplinary offenses, and high risk behaviors. In addition studies conducted by the Army, of Soldiers and Marines in theater, showed declines in individual morale and increases in mental health strain, especially among those who have experienced multiple deployments.

In your view, what role should the Department of Defense play in shaping policies to help prevent suicides both in garrison and in theater and to increase the resiliency of all service members and their families, including members of the reserve components?

Suicides by military members are tragic – every suicide is one too many. It is a complex problem that plagues our entire society – there are no easy answers or quick solutions. I think Secretary Panetta put it best when he said that suicide is perhaps the most frustrating challenge he has come across as Secretary of Defense. I believe that DoD must take a multi-faceted approach to preventing suicides that involves leadership responsibility, access to quality behavioral health care, efforts to improve mental fitness and resiliency, and increased research on causes and means of preventing suicide. If confirmed, I will push for enhancements to DoD’s policies and programs in each of these areas.

What is your understanding of the action that the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Army are taking in response to the July 2010 Army report, and the data in Chapter 3 in particular?

My understanding is that the Department has taken multiple actions to address the rise of suicides since the release of the Army’s July 2010 report as well as the report of the DoD Suicide Prevention Task Force in September 2010 . In particular, in November 2011, the DoD established the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DPSO) to serve as the oversight authority for the implementation, standardization, and evaluation of suicide and risk reduction programs and policies.

If confirmed, what actions will you take to ensure that sufficient mental health resources are available to service members in theater, and to the service members and their families upon return to home station?

I am firmly committed to implementing the President’s Executive Order on “Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families.” I look forward to reviewing the 12-month national suicide prevention campaign that DoD and VA are developing as part of the implementation of this Executive Order and will ensure that DoD does all it can to ensure that it is providing sufficient, high-quality behavioral health care to Service members and their families..

28) Military Quality of Life

The Committee is concerned about the sustainment of key quality of life programs for military families, such as family support, child care, education, employment support, health care, and morale, welfare and recreation services, especially as DOD faces budget challenges.

How do you perceive the relationship between military recruitment and retention and quality of life improvements and your own top priorities for the armed forces?

Quality of life programs that address family readiness needs must be available to families of our military members wherever they may be located. Changes in our basing, deployment patterns, and force structure, as we implement our new strategy and respond to the current fiscal environment, will pose some additional challenges in delivering these programs. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the impacts of such changes to ensure the needs of our military families continue to be met.

If confirmed, what further enhancements to military quality of life would you consider a priority, and how do you envision working with the Services, combatant commanders, family advocacy groups, and Congress to achieve them?

I recognize that the well-being of the force, as well as recruiting and retention efforts, are significantly impacted by quality of life programs. I look forward to working with Congress, family advocacy groups, the Services and combatant commanders to ensure we have a comprehensive, accessible, and affordable suite of programs.

29) Family Readiness and Support

Military members and their families in both the active and reserve components have made, and continue to make, tremendous sacrifices in support of operational deployments. Senior military leaders have warned of growing concerns among military families as a result of the stress of frequent deployments and the long separations that go with them.

What do you consider to be the most important family readiness issues for service members and their families?

It is the Department's responsibility to help prepare military families to cope with the challenges inherent with military service. In order to build and sustain resilient military families, the Department must continue to focus on programs that enhance their social, financial, educational and psychological well-being.

If confirmed, how would you ensure that family readiness needs are addressed and adequately resourced?

Sustaining family programs in the current fiscally constrained environment will be challenging, but it is of vital importance. If confirmed, I will seek to protect funding for family

readiness programs to the greatest extent possible and will examine all such programs to ensure that they are operating efficiently so that available resources are going to their best and most effective uses.

How would you address these family readiness needs in light of global rebasing, deployments, and future reductions in end strength?

Changes in our basing, deployment patterns, and force structure, as we implement our new strategy and respond to the current fiscal environment, will pose some additional challenges to maintaining family readiness. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the impacts of such changes to ensure the needs of our military families continue to be met.

If confirmed, how would you ensure support is provided to reserve component families related to mobilization, deployment and family readiness, as well as to active duty families who do not reside near a military installation?

I believe that DoD has a responsibility to ensure access to quality programs, information and resources to families, regardless of their location. Military OneSource is an excellent example of a resource that is not tied to location, but allows families to access information and referral by the internet or by phone with live consultants available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Maintaining a strong network of community-based providers, and partnerships with state and local governments are also key in ensuring local resources are readily available to Service members and their families, particularly Reserve Component families and Active Component families who do not live near a military installation. If confirmed, I will evaluate these programs to ensure we are meeting the needs of these military families.

If confirmed, what additional steps will you take to enhance family support?

I believe there are opportunities to improve the efficiency and accessibility of the resources and programs that DoD, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and community organizations provide to support service members and their families. If confirmed, I will explore these opportunities and how we can better coordinate efforts among the various entities providing family support.

30) Detainee Treatment Policy

Do you support the policy set forth in the July 7, 2006, memorandum issued by the Deputy Secretary of Defense stating that all relevant DOD directives, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures must fully comply with Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions?

Yes.

Do you support the standards for detainee treatment specified in the revised Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, the Department of Defense Detainee Program, dated September 5, 2006?

Yes.

If confirmed, will you ensure that all DOD policies promulgated and plans implemented related to intelligence interrogations, detainee debriefings, and tactical questioning comply with the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and the Army Field Manual on Interrogations?

Yes.

Do you share the view that standards for detainee treatment must be based on the principle of reciprocity, that is, that we must always keep in mind the risk that the manner in which we treat our own detainees may have a direct impact on the manner in which U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen or Marines are treated, should they be captured in future conflicts?

Yes, reciprocity is a critical component and underlying value of our detainee treatment policies. As a Vietnam veteran, I also view this principle of reciprocity as a way to protect our U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, or Marines, should they be captured in future conflicts.

31) Coordination with the Department of Homeland Security

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Congress established the Department of Homeland Security, and DOD established the U. S. Northern Command and an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs.

What is your assessment of the current situation regarding cooperation and coordination between DOD and DHS on homeland security and civil support matters, and what will be your goals in this regard if you are confirmed?

Recent disaster responses, including the Department's efforts in response to Hurricane Sandy, show that the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have a strong relationship. This success is a result of active engagement the Department has at all levels with DHS and many other of the Department's domestic interagency partners. Elements of the Department work very closely on a daily basis with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The Department and DHS have successfully exchanged liaison and coordination staff officers to cement this collaborative approach at the working level. While a Member of Congress I voted to establish the Department of Homeland Security and have been pleased to see

its success. If confirmed, my goal would be to continue to bolster the strong relationship between the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security.

Do you believe the current mechanism for DOD to respond to the needs of domestic government agencies for DOD support in the event of a natural or man-made disaster is appropriate, or do you believe it needs to be modified?

The mechanisms for the Department to respond to the needs of domestic agencies appear to be working effectively. It is my understanding that the Department acted on 60 requests for assistance from FEMA during the Hurricane Sandy response last year, including helping to restore power, providing millions of gallons of fuel for first responders and residents, and removing water from the Brooklyn Battery tunnel, the longest underwater tunnel in North America. I understand that the Department also responded to some 21 other requests for assistance from FEMA for a variety of other disasters in 2012, as well as providing assistance to other federal agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service for wildland firefighting and the U.S. Secret Service for protection of the President during special events such as the recent Inauguration. If confirmed, I will work with the Department's partner agencies to ensure that the current mechanisms remain effective and, where opportunities arise, pursue improvements.

32) Iraq Lessons Learned

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

Yes, I supported the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Iraq by December 2011 in accordance with the November 2008 U.S.-Iraq Security Agreement. It was the right decision. Our military men and women in uniform had completed their mission. We now have a strong relationship with a sovereign Iraq. Our drawdown has allowed us to advance our strategic partnership based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

In your view, what aspects, if any, of the departure/drawdown of U.S. forces would you have modified?

I would not have modified the withdrawal of all U.S. combat forces by December 2011. I believe that the deadline helped the Iraqi Security Forces step up and take responsibility for the security of their people. This has allowed us to deepen our partnership with a sovereign Iraq, based on mutual interests and mutual respect.

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

I believe we must think very carefully before we commit our Armed Forces to battlefields abroad. Our forces deserve policies and planning worthy of the sacrifices they make in combat. Our

nation learned a number of lessons in Iraq -- from the invasion, to the stabilization, to the withdrawal of our forces. These lessons include ensuring appropriate planning and preparation for a range of outcomes and events, setting clear and realistic strategic objectives, appreciating the limitations of military force and the necessity of engaging all levels of national power (political, economic, cultural, intelligence), recognizing the value and difficulty of building partnership capacity, enhancing interagency coordination, and improving our oversight of wartime spending and contracting. One of the most important lessons is that the U.S. government must prepare for combat, post-combat, and securing the peace. The U.S. military must plan and train with civilian counterparts, be prepared to operate effectively in all phases of conflict, and improve cultural, linguistic, and partnering and advising skills within our force.

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

I understand the Department has taken a number of steps to institutionalize the lessons from Iraq across policy, doctrine, organization, and training. The Department is committed to maintaining a focus on cultural and linguistic capabilities as well as the new operational approaches in counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and security force assistance. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department continues to evaluate and implement lessons learned.

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

I do not feel I know enough at this time to provide not have additional recommendations. If confirmed, I will study and evaluate the Department's efforts to retain and refine the lessons learned, expertise, and specialized capabilities that have been developed over the past ten years of counterinsurgency and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

You called for an international mediator under the auspices of the UN Security Council to engage Iraq's political, religious, ethnic, and tribal leaders. Would you advocate that same course of action for Afghanistan?

If confirmed, I will closely monitor the Afghan-led reconciliation process and make recommendations on any changes I think would be helpful. However, within the Administration, the Afghanistan reconciliation process is led by the Department of State. They are in a better position to advise on the need for a UN Security Council role.

Based on the lessons learned during the departure of military forces from Iraq, if confirmed, how would you shape U.S. enduring presence in Afghanistan in the post-2014 environment?

The U.S. presence post-2014 is an issue being discussed between the President and the government of Afghanistan. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the United States retains

criminal and civil jurisdiction over U.S. forces in the Bilateral Security Agreement now under negotiation; if it does not, I will not support a continued U.S. military presence.

33) Stability and Counterinsurgency Operations

The January 2012 DOD Strategic Guidance called for U.S. forces to be ready to conduct limited counterinsurgency and other stability operations if required, and to retain and continue to refine the lessons learned, expertise, and specialized capabilities that have been gained over the past 10 years of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, the Strategic Guidance states that, “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations.”

In your view, how should strategic guidance for the Department of Defense manage risk and articulate the types of missions or operations U.S. forces will or will not be expected to execute or accomplish?

The Department's strategic guidance documents should set clear priorities that enable senior Departmental leadership to determine appropriate trade-offs in military missions and force structure. Senior leadership deliberation on these trade-offs should be informed by a comprehensive, strategic understanding of risk to our defense and national security objectives. As strategy is implemented, the Department should continue to test it to determine areas of risk and develop mitigation options. If confirmed, I will aim to have any risk the Department bears be both manageable and acceptable; although budget uncertainty will make this a difficult task.

In your view, what are the appropriate roles and responsibilities, if any, between the Department of Defense and other departments and agencies of the Federal Government in the planning and conduct of stability operations?

Coordinated and integrated interagency efforts are essential to the conduct of successful stability operations. The United States should emphasize non-military means and military-to-military cooperation to address instability and reduce the demand for significant U.S. force commitments to stability operations. In general, the Department should be in a support role to other U.S. Government departments and agencies in the planning and execution of most stability operations. However, if directed, the Department will lead stability operations activities to establish security, to restore essential services, to repair and protect critical infrastructure, and to deliver humanitarian assistance. Once acceptable levels of security and public order have been established, the Department should seek to transition lead responsibility to other U.S. Government agencies, foreign governments and security forces, or international governmental organizations.

In developing the capabilities necessary for stability operations, what adjustments, if any, should be made to prepare U.S. Armed Forces to conduct stability operations without detracting from its ability to perform combat missions?

As our campaigns over the last twelve years have demonstrated, it is no longer an

either/or choice between stability operations and combat. After almost two decades of hard-earned lessons in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans, and elsewhere, I understand the Services have made great strides in their combined abilities to conduct stability operations. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain the stability operations expertise the Department has gained, and to ensure that the Services have the mechanisms necessary to expand their capacities, should our military forces be called upon to conduct comprehensive and sustained stability operations.

Do you believe that the U.S. government needs to establish new procedures to manage stability operations? If so, why?

Collaborative and coordinated planning with interagency and international partners is fundamental to the successful management and the effectiveness of U.S. government stabilization and reconstruction activities. We must have a strong combined ability to conduct effective interagency planning. If confirmed, I will review the Department's procedures to identify potential improvements in the current processes and procedures used to manage stability operations across the U.S. Government and, as necessary and possible, expand the Department's support to other departments and agencies in their stability operations planning and execution.

With the drawdown of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, what is your view on the future disposition of foreign and security force funding authorities including 1206 (Global Train and Equip), the Global Security Contingency Fund and other security force assistance authorities?

Today's security challenges cannot and should not be addressed by the United States alone. We need partnerships that combine our unique capabilities with the unique strengths of our allies and partners. Future challenges will likely emphasize the importance of our collaboration with capable partners. I understand that in order to meet our counterterrorism challenges, the Department shares these two authorities with the State Department to train and equip foreign security forces in a more rapid fashion than traditional Foreign Military Financing. Section 1206 is an important part of the Department's "toolbox" for responding to urgent and emerging counterterrorism challenges and stability operations, and that the Global Security Contingency Fund (GSCF) is in its initial pilot phase. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department effectively and efficiently leverages authorities that enable our security force assistance efforts. These efforts are important to the Department's ability to build the capacity of foreign partners to help them develop effective and legitimate security institutions that can provide for their countries' internal security, and contribute to regional and multilateral responses to threats and instability.

In your view, is there a roll for the Department of Defense in improving the operational capabilities of the African Standby Brigades?

The Department can help improve the capabilities of the individual countries contributing forces to the African Standby Brigades. Direct training can make a qualitative difference in the capabilities of partner countries and increase the effectiveness of the regional organizations that mandate such operations. In terms of helping the Standby Brigades once they are established, I

understand that there are Presidential Determinations authorizing work with some regional organizations. In the cases where the Department is able to engage, I understand that habitual training and exercises can help strengthen the Brigades' operational capabilities.

34) Security Situation in Iraq

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

The overall security situation is stable, yet challenges remain. It is critical for Iraq to resolve its internal boundary disputes and political differences without the use or threat of force. I am concerned about the intent of al Qaeda in Iraq to exploit political and sectarian differences to breed instability. The Iraqi Security Forces have proven themselves capable of countering this threat to date and I believe that our continuing partnership with Iraq should aim to help Iraq against this terrorist threat.

What are the main challenges to stability and security in Iraq over the coming months?

The main challenges to internal stability and security in Iraq are al Qaeda in Iraq, slow political progress, and sectarian- motivated groups who would use violence to advance their cause. Moreover, the unresolved status of territories claimed by the Kurdistan Regional Government has the potential to create fissures that can be exploited by extremist groups, and could lead to an escalation of tension between Kurdish and central government forces. While plenty of stumbling blocks exist, it is important that the Iraqi political parties continue to look to the political process to resolve their differences. Continuing to encourage dialogue and respect for the constitutional process will be crucial to ensuring long-term stability. The United States must also closely watch the impact that events external to Iraq, such as the deteriorating situation in Syria, have on Iraqi stability and security.

35) U.S.-Iraq Strategic Relationship

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

How do you envision the U.S.-Iraq strategic relationship developing in the coming years and what are your priorities for that relationship?

The United States should seek a normal, productive relationship and a strategic

partnership with a sovereign Iraq -- analogous to the partnerships we have with other countries in the region and around the world. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen our military-to-military relationship with Iraq, and further its re-integration into the region.

What do you see as the greatest challenges for that relationship over the coming years?

Iraq faces several tough challenges as the nation's new government matures and works through internal differences, and it will be important to continue to engage Iraq during a time of change. We have moved from occupiers to partners, and that can be a hard transition. But recent turmoil in the broader Middle East highlights the importance of active U.S. engagement and maintaining strategic partnerships with regional partners based on mutual interests and mutual respect. We must maintain focus on Iraq in order to advance broader U.S. objectives of peace and security in the region.

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

My understanding of the MOU is that it represents mutual understandings regarding future expansion of defense cooperation. In a time of great uncertainty in the region, Iraq will play an increasingly important role in ensuring stability and it is critical that we continue to work together to ensure stability and peace in the region.

36) Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq

In the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013, Congress authorized the Secretary of Defense to support the transition in Iraq by providing funds for the activities and operations of the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq (OSC-I). In the report accompanying the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, the conferees expressed their expectation that the Administration will accelerate the transition of the OSC-I to a normalized status comparable to Offices of Security Cooperation in other countries in the region, and that funding for OSC-I activities and operations will be transitioned out of the Department of Defense to other sources, as is the case for offices of security cooperation in other countries.

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

Yes. The Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq (OSC-I), under Chief of Mission authority, is the foundation for our long-term security partnership with Iraq. If confirmed, I will continue Secretary Panetta's work to normalize the OSC-I, in coordination with the Department of State, which has lead for the U.S. Mission in Iraq.

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

Yes. If confirmed, I will work with the Department of State, which has lead for the U.S. Mission in Iraq, to normalize the OSC-I and transition to traditional security assistance and security cooperation funding sources.

What timeframe would you use as a target to transition OSC-I to a normalized status?

I am unable to comment on the specific timing as I have not reviewed the detailed plans and it is a decision to be made with the Department of State, which has lead for the U.S. Mission in Iraq. If confirmed, I will review the planning for OSC-I normalization and work closely with the Department of State.

37) Afghanistan Strategy

Do you support the current strategy for Afghanistan? In your view, is that the right strategy?

Yes, I support the strategy that the President has set forth and that we are now implementing, and I believe it is the right strategy. I believe that any strategy should be reviewed and adapted over time, and, if confirmed, will give my best advice to the President and consult with Congress on this critical issue.

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

I believe that the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan is sound. I also believe that, over time, the Administration should continue to assess the strategy. If confirmed, I will consult with Congress, and with our Allies and partners in this regard.

What is your assessment of the progress of the campaign in Afghanistan?

I believe that our campaign in Afghanistan has made significant progress. Our Coalition and Afghan partners blunted the insurgents' summer offensive for the second consecutive year. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) are moving into security lead throughout the country. They are pushing violence out of most populated areas, and the United States and our coalition partners agreed in Chicago to support the long-term stability and security of Afghanistan. Exceeding initial expectations, Afghan forces began leading the majority of operations in July 2012 and now lead approximately 80% of operations. In February, in conjunction with the fourth tranche of transition, the ANSF is expected to have the lead in securing 87% of the Afghan population. Overall violence was down 7% in 2012. At the same time, I understand that significant challenges remain, including insider threats and completing the transition to Afghanistan taking on full responsibility for its security at the end of 2014.

38) Security Transition in Afghanistan

President Obama and Afghan President Karzai recently announced that the

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

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

Yes. As this transition occurs, I understand that the International Security Assistance Force will shift into an advisor support role.

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

Yes. This mission shift to an increasingly support role is consistent with what Afghans want and what was agreed at the 2010 Lisbon Summit – an Afghanistan able to provide for its own security, with the assistance of the U.S. and other nations. The U.S. and our Coalition and Afghan partners reaffirmed this goal at the 2012 Chicago NATO Summit. For transition to be successful, it makes good sense for the ANSF to assume lead security responsibility this year, enabled by continued support and mentoring from ISAF to prepare them for full security responsibility by the end of 2014.

Do you agree that it is important for the success of the mission in Afghanistan to have Afghan security forces, rather than coalition forces, taking the lead for security and conducting unilateral operations to the maximum extent?

Yes. Training and developing the Afghan National Security Forces into a force that can sustainably assume full security responsibility by the end of 2014 is critical to meeting this objective.

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

I understand that the ANSF have exceeded initial expectations. Afghan forces began leading the majority of operations in July 2012 and now lead approximately 80% of operations, including increasingly complex, multi-day operations. Violence in transition Tranches 1, 2, and 3, where the ANSF are now in the lead, was down 9%, 6%, and 14% respectively in 2012 compared to 2011. Some of these initial areas of transition include contested areas, such as Lashkar Gah and Helmand, where the ANSF have done well. However, the last two transition Tranches contain many contested areas, so significant challenges remain and ISAF support will be critical throughout 2013-2014.

In your opinion, are there any conditions on the ground in Afghanistan at the end of 2014

that would preclude a responsible transition of mission from combat to support for U.S. forces? Under what conditions, if any, would you recommend against making such a transition at the end of 2014?

Currently, I believe that transition is on track for the Afghans to assume full security responsibility by the end of 2014. At this time, I do not foresee any realistic conditions that would preclude this transition from being completed responsibly by the end of 2014. If confirmed, I will monitor the conditions closely and will continue to assess progress, in consultation with commanders on the ground and the Joint Chiefs; and, if necessary and warranted by changing conditions, I will adjust the Department's recommendations.

39) Draw Down of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan

In June 2011, President Obama announced his decision to draw down the 33,000 U.S. surge force in Afghanistan so that by the summer of 2012 U.S. forces will be at a level of 68,000. The President recently reaffirmed his pledge to continue to bring U.S. forces home from Afghanistan at a steady pace. He also stated he would announce the next phase of the U.S. drawdown based on the recommendations of the ISAF Commander and other commanders on the ground in Afghanistan.

How would you assess the decision to draw down the 33,000 U.S surge force from Afghanistan by the end of summer 2012?

In my view, the decision to draw down the U.S. surge by the end of the summer has been proven by conditions on the ground. Although challenges remain and progress in Afghanistan has been uneven in many areas, overall security has improved and Afghans are increasingly in the lead.

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

I do not have access to the relevant analysis to make a detailed assessment, but understand that President Obama will consider options provided by our senior military and civilian leaders. I support the President's direction, articulated in the West Point speech, for "steady" reductions. If confirmed, ensuring an effective transition in Afghanistan will be one of my top priorities.

What in your view should be the size and missions of any residual U.S. force that may remain in Afghanistan after the end of 2014?

The key missions of any post-2014 military presence would focus : training, advising, and assisting Afghan National Security Forces; and targeted counterterrorism missions against al Qaeda and its affiliates, , while also protecting U.S. forces and citizens. The size of the force will flow from missions assigned.

In your view, is there a minimum number of troops that will be required to both accomplish the assigned mission and provide security for those executing that mission?

I have not yet reviewed the detailed mission planning and analysis to form a view regarding the appropriate number of U.S., coalition, and Afghan troops necessary to fulfill key missions including force protection. I do believe that sufficient forces should be provided to do the job assigned to them, while protecting themselves.

40) Status of Forces Agreement for Afghanistan

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

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

Yes, I agree with the position made clear by the President during his joint press conference with President Karzai on January 11, 2013, that "it would not be possible for us to have any kind of U.S. troop presence [in Afghanistan] post-2014 without assurances that our men and women who are operating there are [not] in some way subject to the jurisdiction of another country."

41) Afghanistan National Security Forces

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

Based on the information available to me, I believe that the ANSF has and continues to make significant progress over the past few years. I understand that today the ANSF field three out of every four people in uniform defending Afghanistan, and that Afghans conduct the majority of operations backed up by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

What do you see as the main challenges to building the capacity of the ANSF and, if confirmed, what recommendations, if any, would you make for addressing those challenges?

A first challenge is to continue to improve the quality, readiness and performance of the 352,000 personnel in the ANSF. I understand that problems remain in leadership, retention, corruption, and the long personnel training needed to operate certain enablers such as logistics and ISR. A second challenge is for the ANSF to develop a greater capacity for maintaining equipment and integrating it into operations needed for logistics support, mobility, ISR, and operational planning. I am aware that the Department has an aggressive effort to close these

enabler gaps. Third, and most broadly, the ANSF must continue building its self-confidence through operational success in taking the lead responsibility for securing transitioning areas and protecting the Afghan people. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to continue, and where necessary, adjust efforts to build ANSF capacity and capability.

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

Yes. I understand that our commanders consider the current ANSF force of 352,000 personnel necessary to complete the transition to Afghan lead security responsibility by the end of 2014, and to secure the country during the transition of power following the Afghan Presidential election in 2014. If confirmed, I will continue to review the numbers and capabilities of the ANSF to ensure that we are supporting a force structure that is sufficient to meet our goals, and is fiscally sustainable over the long term.

Do you agree that any reductions in the ANSF from this 352,000 level should be based on security conditions in Afghanistan at the time those reductions would be expected to occur?

I agree that changes in ANSF force levels should take account of expected security conditions. At the same time, for planning and budgeting purposes, it is necessary to make projections about the future security environment and plans about future force levels. If confirmed, I will review these issues and propose adjustments over time, as appropriate.

42) Insider Threat

In 2012 there was a significant increase in the number of so-called “green-on-blue” incidents in which individuals in Afghan uniform attacked U.S. or coalition soldiers. The rising number of insider attacks has led U.S. and Afghan military leaders to order a number of precautions against such insider threats, including expanding Afghan counterintelligence efforts to identify possible Taliban infiltrators, increasing cultural sensitivity training, and expanding the “Guardian Angel” program to protect against the insider threat in meetings between coalition and Afghan forces.

What is your assessment of the insider threat and its impact on the military campaign in Afghanistan?

Insider attacks have the potential to damage the strategic trust necessary for our campaign to succeed. It is vital that we work with our Afghan and international partners to take every step possible to stop these attacks. I understand that U.S. and Afghan efforts have reduced attacks and are helping to reduce risks to coalition personnel. If confirmed, I will continue to pay close attention to countering this threat.

What is your assessment of the measures that have been taken by ISAF and Afghan leaders to address the insider threat?

My understanding is that the measures put in place to date have helped to mitigate the

threat from insider attacks, with the number of attacks now dropping from a peak in August 2012. Raised awareness of the threat and the implementation of robust force protection measures help protect our personnel, but the work by the ANSF to identify threats and prevent attacks through improved intelligence gathering and vetting of personnel remains critical. As we move into the “fighting season” we need to ensure these steps continue to be implemented fully and that ISAF continues to take the necessary steps to prevent these attacks. If confirmed, I will make this a key priority.

Are there additional steps that you would recommend to address this threat, if confirmed?

If confirmed, I will continue current efforts – and ask for a constant review of additional measures to further reduce the risk posed by insider threats.

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

It is understandable that insider attacks have negatively impacted trust in some areas. However, after more than 11 years of fighting shoulder to shoulder and shared sacrifice, I believe that, in most areas, the relationship between the ANSF and the Coalition remains strong, particularly out in the field, where soldiers face a common enemy every day.

In light of the spike in insider attacks, do you see a need to reconsider our plans for embedding small Security Force Assistance Teams of U.S. military personnel with Afghan military units as part of the transition to an Afghan security lead?

If confirmed, I will place a priority on mitigating insider attacks and will ensure that our commanders continually assess the impact of these attacks on the campaign, and consider whether changes to the Security Force Assistance Team model should be made, including any temporary adjustments as needed.

43) Reconciliation

In your view, what should be the role of the United States in any reconciliation negotiations with the Afghan Taliban and other insurgent groups?

I agree with President Obama that Afghan-led reconciliation is the surest way to end violence and ensure lasting stability in Afghanistan and the region. Most counterinsurgencies end in some form of negotiation. The U.S. role should be to facilitate credible negotiations between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, and ensure that three necessary outcomes are met: that the Taliban and armed groups end violence, break ties with al Qaeda, and accept Afghanistan's constitution, including protections for all Afghan men and women.

What additional steps, if any, should the United States be taking to help advance the reconciliation process?

The U.S. should continue to coordinate efforts closely with the Afghan Government.

In your view, what should be the role of Afghanistan’s neighbors, in particular Pakistan, in the reconciliation process?

Afghanistan's neighbors should support an Afghan-led process. Each will benefit from improved stability in Afghanistan or potentially suffer from continued violence. Pakistan and other neighbors should work forthrightly with Afghanistan to mitigate any suspicions or misunderstandings.

44) Special Operations in Afghanistan

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

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

If confirmed, I will seek to ensure that all U.S. forces in Afghanistan – including both special operations forces and general purpose forces – are supported by sufficient enablers. In addition to providing clear guidance to commanders, I will seek the military advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and ensure that the views of all relevant Combatant Commanders are taken into account.

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

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

Having Afghans in the lead for “night operations” makes good sense for three reasons. First, this approach helps ensure that cultural and language differences do not result in misunderstandings that could escalate a situation. Second, having Afghans in the lead allows for improved real-time intelligence collection. And third, the Afghan Special Operations Forces are capable of fulfilling this mission and their doing so is a key part of the transition.

General Allen and others have consistently praised the Village Stability Operations (VSO) and Afghan Local Police (ALP) programs – both U.S. Special Operations missions - as critical elements of the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan. Some Afghans have called for the removal of U.S. Special Operators from these operations.

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

I understand that Village Stability Operations (VSO) and the Afghan Local Police (ALP) have contributed to the decline in Taliban control in many strategic areas throughout Afghanistan. If I am confirmed, I will make a priority to assess the potential future value of these programs.

45) U.S. Strategic Relationship with Pakistan

What would you consider to be areas of shared strategic interest between the United States and Pakistan?

I believe the U.S. and Pakistan share common interests in disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al Qaeda, and in long-term regional stability, including a durable political settlement in Afghanistan and the safety and security of the Indian Ocean.

In what areas do you see U.S. and Pakistani strategic interests diverging?

The U.S. and Pakistan often diverge over Pakistan's approach to the militant and terrorist networks that operate in Pakistan's territory and do not overtly threaten the Pakistani state. However, in my view, these networks threaten Pakistani stability, endanger the prospects for a settlement in Afghanistan, and undermine regional stability — so that in fact, while the relationship is challenging, I believe our long-term strategic interests are in alignment.

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

U.S.-Pakistan military-to-military ties have been marked by periodic ups and downs. In my view, the military-military relationship should be underlined by a realistic, pragmatic approach to enhancing those areas of cooperation that are dictated by our common interests and to ensuring accountability for actions that detract from these interests. If confirmed, I will make accomplishing that goal a priority.

46) U.S. Assistance to Pakistan

Since 2001, the United States has provided significant military assistance to Pakistan. In addition, the United States has provided significant funds to reimburse Pakistan for the costs associated with military operations conducted by Pakistan along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and other support provided in connection with Operation Enduring Freedom.

In your view, how effective has the assistance and other support that the United States has provided to Pakistan been in promoting U.S. interests?

As the President has said, more terrorists have been killed in Pakistan than anywhere else since 9/11—and that would not be possible without Pakistani cooperation. Security assistance for Pakistan has helped Pakistan press this campaign against the militant and terrorist networks that threaten us all. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that our security assistance and other support to Pakistan both serves U.S. interests and is cost effective.

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

U.S. assistance to Pakistan should not be unconditional. At the same time, any conditions should be carefully examined to ensure they advance U.S. strategic interests.

47) Al Qaeda and Associated Forces

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

I assess that the threat posed by al Qaeda to the U.S. homeland has been significantly diminished over the past four years. At the same time, al Qaeda’s remaining leadership in Pakistan and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula remains of serious concern. Additionally, the Arab Spring has created new opportunities for al Qaeda affiliates in Syria and North Africa.

In light of the recent events in Benghazi and Algeria, do you share the assessment that al Qaeda is on the brink of strategic defeat?

Our sustained military, intelligence, and diplomatic efforts over the last ten years have brought us closer to the strategic defeat of core al Qaeda. There can be no doubt, however, that al Qaeda and associated forces remain potent, dangerous, and adaptable foes – as evidenced by its despicable actions in Benghazi and more recently in Algeria. If confirmed, I will continue to focus on defeating al Qaeda and its associated forces around the world.

48) Arab Spring

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

In your view, what should be the posture of the U.S. Government on military-to-military and defense civilian relations in the region?

The Department of Defense's military-to-military and defense civilian relations with our

partners in the Middle East and North Africa have played a critical role in advancing U.S. strategic interests, which include: securing and protecting Israel, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, defeating extremists, countering terrorist organizations, ensuring the free flow of commerce, and supporting operations in Afghanistan. Engagement with key partners' defense ministries and militaries, building partner capacity to meet common challenges, having a forward presence to enable operations and deter threats, and if and when necessary to conduct future contingencies, all require considerable effort by both the Department of Defense and the Department of State. During this time of change and uncertainty in the region, the Department should sustain military-to-military and defense civilian relations, while continuing to evaluate and re-calibrate the nature and substance of our relationships to ensure they are consistent with U.S. values and advance U.S. vital national interests.

49) **Syria**

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

In your view, what is the proper role on the United States in this conflict?

I support the Administration's position that Syrian President Bashar al-Asad has lost all legitimacy and must step aside to enable a political solution that ends the bloodshed, and meets the aspirations of the Syrian people. As President Obama has clearly stated, Asad must go. I also support the Administration's approach to the ongoing crisis in Syria - working closely with allies, partners and multilateral institutions to achieve this goal through diplomatic and economic pressure on the Asad regime.

I agree with the Administration's continued support of the Geneva Action Group's framework for a political solution, which was endorsed by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the Arab League, and the UN General Assembly. And, if confirmed, I will continue to support Joint UN-Arab League Special Representative Brahimi's efforts to build international support for the Geneva framework and urge all parties in Syria to take steps toward its implementation, to help expedite an end to the suffering of the Syrian people.

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

The U.S. Government should continue providing non-lethal assistance to the unarmed opposition, as well as humanitarian support to Syrians in need, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries. The United States should also continue to support the opposition in the diplomatic arena. This includes helping the newly established Syrian Opposition Council with its efforts to end the conflict and improve the future of the Syrian people. I also believe that, like ongoing diplomatic efforts, U.S. assistance efforts should continue to be coordinated with our Allies, partners, and relevant regional groups to have the biggest impact possible.

I do not believe that providing lethal support to the armed opposition at this time will alleviate the horrible situation we see in Syria. The Syrian people are in great need during this difficult period, and the United States is helping to address those basic needs by providing medical assistance, humanitarian assistance, and political support on the international stage. We must continually explore additional ways to provide resources and help influence the right outcome.

If confirmed, will you review Defense Department planning for options to ensure the security of chemical weapons in Syria, and recommend any additional planning, if needed?

If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues planning for a variety of contingencies in order to provide the President with options. This includes relevant planning for Syria and specifically, the security and elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. If confirmed, I will review these plans and, if necessary, I will direct additional planning on this and any other potential contingencies.

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

The United States is working with our allies to achieve a peaceful and orderly political transition in Syria and to end the bloodshed as quickly as possible. Our NATO Allies are closely monitoring the situation in Syria, especially as the conflict touches on NATO's border in Turkey, and like us, are extremely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions on the ground. NATO's ultimate task is the protection and defense of NATO members. To that end, I support NATO's decision to augment Turkey's air and missile defense capabilities in order to defend the population and territory of Turkey and contribute to the de-escalation of the crisis along the Alliance's border. This includes the recent deployment of NATO Patriot batteries to Turkey from the U.S., Germany, and The Netherlands. I understand the Administration has also been working with our international partners, including NATO Allies, to ensure that the appropriate humanitarian assistance is reaching those Syrians in need, both inside Syria and in neighboring countries (Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, and Iraq).

50) Libya

On March 19, 2011, the multilateral military operation, named Operation Odyssey Dawn, was launched in Libya to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. Following the initial operations against Libyan integrated air defense systems, this operation continued under NATO Command as Operation Unified Protector

What are your views on the limited U.S. military mission in Libya – Operation Odyssey Dawn and Operation Unified Protector?

I believe the U.S. and NATO operations in Libya were a success. Operation Odyssey Dawn stopped Colonel Qadhafi's army from advancing on Benghazi, saved thousands of lives, and established the conditions for a no-fly-zone. Operation Unified Protector built on these accomplishments and created the time and space needed for the opposition to oppose, and ultimately overthrow, Qadhafi. Both operations had limited and clear objectives for the unique capabilities the U.S. military could provide, avoided U.S. boots-on-the-ground, integrated Allies and partners, minimized collateral damage and civilian casualties to a historically unprecedented extent, and enjoyed the legitimacy of UN Security Council authorization. This was all achieved at a fraction of the cost of recent interventions in the Balkans, Iraq, or Afghanistan.

51) U.S. Marine Corps Support to the State Department

The Accountability Review Board for Benghazi recently completed its report examining the facts and circumstances surrounding the September 11-12, 2012 attack against the U.S. temporary mission facility in Benghazi. Among its findings and conclusions, its report supported the "State Department's initiative to request additional Marines and expand the Marine Security Guard (MSG) Program – as well as corresponding requirements for staffing and funding. The Board also recommends that the State Department and DOD identify additional flexible MSG structures and request further resources for the Department and DOD to provide more capabilities and capacities at higher risk posts." In the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, Congress authorized up to 1000 additional marines in the MSG program to provide the additional end strength and resources necessary to support enhanced Marine Corps security at United States embassies, consulates, and other diplomatic facilities.

In your view, should the Marine Corps diplomatic security mission be expanded to include new roles beyond the protection of classified information and equipment, and if so, how many additional marines and what rank structure would be needed?

I am aware that the Departments of Defense and State are currently thoroughly examining the challenges and threats posed by global unrest to our overseas operations and are developing options to address these challenges. These options include consideration of expanding Marine Security Guard detachments, as well as adjustments to their roles and responsibilities. I have not reviewed the details of the options and, therefore, am unable to comment on the specific arrangements, numbers of personnel, or rank structure at this time. However, if confirmed, I will place personal emphasis on this issue and work closely with the Secretary of State and Congress to ensure we are doing all we can to help protect our diplomats and diplomatic facilities overseas.

In your view, should the current arrangements between the Department of State and U.S. Marine Corps be modified?

I cannot recommend any changes at this time. If confirmed, I will review the on-going work and recommendations that are being developed by the Departments of Defense and State that is examining the roles, responsibilities, and arrangements of the US Marine Security Guards

and the Department of State.

52) Strategic Communications and Information Operations

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

What are your views on DOD’s military information support operations and influence programs?

I believe the Department of Defense must be able to influence and inform foreign audiences in environments susceptible to the messages of U.S. adversaries. Military Information Support Teams (MIST) are trained in developing culturally appropriate messages to counter hostile information and propaganda, as well as assisting with building the capacity of partner nations to conduct these activities themselves. I understand that Department of Defense influence activities, including those conducted by MISTs, are coordinated closely with the Embassies in the areas where they operate, both inside and outside of areas of conflict, and at times can support common efforts of other agencies. I understand the Department has taken significant steps to address Congressional concerns related to policy oversight, budgeting, and effectiveness. If confirmed, I intend to continue to be responsive to Congress on this matter, as well as to continue the Department’s efforts to coordinate information activities across the interagency.

In 2005, al-Qaeda’s Ayman al-Zawahiri declared that “We are in a battle, and more than half of it is taking place in the battlefield of the media.” In 2010, a non-partisan study highlighted the lack of a U.S. strategy to counter radical ideologies that foment violence (e.g. Islamism or Salafist-Jihadism).

In your view, what is the appropriate role of DOD, if any, in developing and implementing a strategy to counter radical ideologies, and how does that role complement or conflict with the efforts of the intelligence community and the State Department?

Countering violent extremist ideology is a whole-of-government endeavor. I believe the Defense Department’s focus should be on using its assets to meet military objectives and providing support to other U.S. Government agencies as requested. I understand the Department’s activities in this area are closely coordinated with the Intelligence Community and the State Department.

Defense Secretary Gates launched the Minerva Program in 2009 to develop deeper social, cultural and behavioral expertise for policy and strategy purposes.

Do you support this program and its goals?

I understand both Secretary Gates and Secretary Panetta supported the MINERVA initiative, which provides the Department with a means to focus research on complex social, cultural and political dynamics related to our strategic interests around the world. If confirmed, I would seek to learn more about the program and assess its continued value in supporting policy and strategy development.

53) Somalia

Somalia is a training and operations hub for al Shabab and other violent extremists; pirates operating in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Peninsula; illicit traffickers of weapons, humans, and drugs; and remnants of the al Qaeda East Africa cell that was responsible for the destruction of our embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in August of 1998.

What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Shabab to the U.S. homeland and U.S. and Western interests in the East African region?

My understanding is that successful operations by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) have reduced Al-Shabaab's freedom of movement in south and central Somalia, but Al-Shabaab remains a threat to the U.S. homeland and to U.S. and Western interests in the Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab leaders have claimed affiliation with al Qaeda since 2007 and formally merged with the group in February 2012. Al-Shabaab has demonstrated a desire and capability to conduct terrorist acts throughout the Horn of Africa, and it presents a threat to the homeland through links into Somali diaspora communities in the U.S. and Europe. Al-Shabaab continues to repress the Somali people and remains the greatest threat to the new Somali Government. As the new Somali Government stands up, I believe that the United States must remain focused on the risks posed by Al-Shabaab.

Given the role of the various U.S. Government Departments and Agencies in the Horn of Africa, what changes, if any, would you make to DOD's current role in the Horn of Africa?

With the establishment of the new government in Somalia and U.S. recognition of that government earlier this month, the Department will continue to play a role in Somalia's security sector development in order to help secure the gains made by AMISOM. Most of the U.S. Government's traditional security cooperation tools have been restricted from use in Somalia for some time, but I understand that the U.S. will explore possible changes in the coming year, as the U.S. moves to normalize relations with Mogadishu. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department's approach to Somalia is developed as part of a coordinated U.S. national security policy toward the Horn of Africa, and to determine how the Department can and should best support our foreign policy in this region.

In your view, what role, if any, should the United States play in the building of a Somali national army?

The United States can play a guiding and mentoring role in the development of Somalia's security sector. It is in the U.S. interest to ensure that Somalia's new government has a competent and professional military to provide security to its citizens and play a constructive role in the region.

54) Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

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

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

I am very concerned about the threat that al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) poses to the homeland. AQAP has attempted at least three attacks on the United States since December 2009, and in my view fully intends to attack again. AQAP has shown some very sophisticated and innovative techniques, such as the development of concealed explosive devices and printer cartridge bombs. AQAP is also attempting to recruit and radicalize would-be terrorists in the West through its extensive media outreach.

What is your assessment of the current U.S. strategy to counter al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, specifically in Yemen?

I support the Administration's whole-of-government strategy to: support the political transition, marshal international economic and humanitarian assistance, and build Yemen's counter-terrorism capabilities through training and assistance. The U.S. strategy to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat AQAP is a collaborative U.S.-Yemeni effort. By closely monitoring and acting on current threat streams while building key Yemeni capabilities, I believe the United States has shown the ability to counter near-term threats.

We have made a number of important gains against AQAP over the past couple of years. I understand that the Department continues to collaborate extensively with Yemeni forces on operational matters, which have helped remove several key AQAP operatives from the battlefield. Efforts to counter AQAP's narrative have helped to delegitimize the group and discourage its efforts to recruit new operatives. The U.S. Government's work on countering threat financing has made it more difficult for AQAP to receive funds and to support other parts of al Qaeda. U.S. efforts – many of them executed by the Department – to train, advise, and equip Yemeni forces are driving AQAP from territory it previously held and are enabling precise operations to capture and kill AQAP leaders.

55) North Africa

In December 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta stated that “Al-Qaeda has long sought to operate in areas beyond the reach of effective security and governance, [and] we know that al-Qaeda, its affiliates and adherents are looking to establish a foothold in other countries in the Middle East, and north and west Africa, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Boko Haram group in Nigeria.”

What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda and its associated forces in North Africa? Do they pose a threat to the United States homeland and/or U.S. interests abroad?

Al Qaeda in the lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) poses an increasing threat to U.S. interests. My understanding is that at this time, there is no credible evidence that AQIM is a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. However, as seen in the recent hostage situation in Algeria, AQIM and its associates do threaten U.S. persons and interests abroad, as well as our European Allies.

In January 2013, the French Armed Forces began conducting operations against violent extremist groups in Mali.

In your view, what should be the role, if any, of the United States in supporting the French operation?

The U.S. shares the French goal of denying AQIM and other terrorists a safe haven in the region. I agree with the Administration’s decision to support the French mission without deploying U.S. combat forces on the ground. My understanding is that this support includes assisting the movement of French and African forces, providing intelligence and planning support, and assisting in the training and preparation of African forces.

In your view, what should be the role of the United States in working with United Nation’s Security Council authorized forces from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali?

The African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), approved by a Chapter VII UN Security Council mandate to restore Malian sovereignty and counter violent extremists, is very important for U.S. interests and for regional stability. I support the U.S. position to expedite the training, equipping and deployment of West African troops as part of AFISMA to ensure a successful, African-led mission.

56) Collaboration between the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community

Since September 11, 2001, collaboration – both analytical and operational – between the Defense Department and the Intelligence Community has grown increasingly close. On one hand, seamless collaboration is a vital component of effective and rapid responses to non-traditional threats, and bringing together the strengths of the full spectrum of defense and intelligence missions creates opportunities for solutions to complex problems.

On the other hand, such collaboration – without effective management and oversight – risks blurring the missions of agencies and individuals that have cultivated distinct strengths or creating redundant lines of effort.

What are your views regarding the appropriate scope of collaboration between DOD and the Intelligence Community?

Collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community (IC) is an essential element for supporting our national security objectives. Eight of the 17 IC components are embedded in the Department which constitutes a substantial portion of the nation's intelligence capabilities and resources. It is my understanding that the Department depends on capabilities provided by the IC to support weapons systems acquisition and to enable military operations, while the IC depends on capabilities provided by the Department to support a wide range of critical intelligence-related and special activities. Collaboration has also been central to the ability to dismantle and eventually defeat al Qaeda and to counter the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. In 2007, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) established the position of the Director of Defense Intelligence (DDI) within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and dual-hatted the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)) as the DDI. The DNI and the USD(I) have since pursued National Intelligence Program (NIP)-Military Intelligence Program (MIP) budget integration leading to more effectiveness and efficiencies from vital intelligence resources.

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

I do not know the issue well enough to make recommendations at the time. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department consistently assesses its processes and procedures for evaluating how it interacts with the IC and look for opportunities to build on the existing relationship.

57) NATO Alliance

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance continues to be central to our coalition operations in Afghanistan and elsewhere, even as many NATO members have significantly reduced their national defense budgets in response to economic and fiscal pressures.

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

Yes, the transatlantic relationship is of critical importance to U.S. security interests. NATO has been the cornerstone of European security and an integral part of U.S. foreign policy for more than sixty years, and NATO has continued to be critically important to U.S. security interests in recent years. In Afghanistan, there have been nearly 40,000 Allied and partner

forces alongside our own. In Libya, NATO Allies came together with Arab and other partners to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, and to support the Libyan people. Over years in the Balkans, NATO has been vital to stability and has moved us closer to the goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace. NATO must remain the central Alliance in U.S. global strategy and has proven an effective partner.

What are the greatest opportunities and challenges that you foresee for NATO in meeting its strategic objectives over the next five years?

In my view, the top NATO-related challenge is the mounting fiscal pressures facing all Allies and the resulting reduction in Alliance military capabilities as Allies cut spending. However, these fiscal difficulties present an opportunity to transform NATO into an Alliance that is more efficient, with a new way of doing business that emphasizes innovation, flexibility, and enhanced cooperation and interoperability with Allies and partners. The Alliance must also continue to adapt to meet the new threats of the 21st century: cyber attacks, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and regional conflicts.

In light of the reductions in national defense spending by some NATO members, are you concerned that the Alliance will lack critical military capabilities? If so, what steps, if any, would you recommend be taken to address potential shortfalls in Alliance capabilities?

Yes, I am concerned that the Alliance is in danger of losing critical military capabilities if something does not change. The past decade-plus of fighting in Afghanistan has left the Alliance with worn equipment and depleted defense budgets. The Alliance should commit to halting defense cuts, complete the capability projects it has already initiated, and reinvest the funds it will save from the end of combat operations in Afghanistan into sustaining and building prioritized capabilities. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NATO's commitments to critical capabilities.

The concept of defense cooperation between NATO members was emphasized at the NATO summit in Chicago in May 2012.

What areas or projects do you recommend that NATO nations cooperate in to improve NATO alliance capabilities?

I support the roadmap for NATO that was agreed to by Presidents and Prime Ministers from across the Alliance at the Chicago Summit last May. It describes and prioritizes NATO's required capabilities, encourages greater pooling of resources, and focuses on improving education, training, and technology to preserve the interoperability resulting from years of joint operations in Afghanistan.

Under what conditions, if any, would you envision further enlargement of NATO in the coming years?

If confirmed, I would work closely with my colleagues in the Administration and in close consultation with Congress and our Allies to determine which countries and within what timeframe NATO would undertake further enlargement. Each NATO aspirant should be judged on its individual merits and progress in implementing political, economic and military reforms.

In your view, is there a continuing requirement for U.S. nuclear weapons to be deployed in NATO countries?

I agree with the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review that the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons, along with NATO's unique nuclear sharing arrangements, contribute to Alliance cohesion and provide reassurance to Allies and partners who feel exposed to regional threats. Any changes should only be taken after a thorough review within, and a decision by, the Alliance. I also support NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture Review that the President and fellow Heads of State and Government agreed to at the May 2012 Chicago NATO Summit. The review committed the Alliance to ensuring that NATO's nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective. The review also stated that the Alliance is prepared to consider further reductions in non-strategic nuclear weapons assigned to the Alliance, in the context of reciprocal steps by Russia. If confirmed, I will continue to consult with our Allies on any such negotiations.

What is your understanding of the relationship between Israel and Turkey as it relates to NATO? Are you concerned about the breakdown in the security cooperation relationship between Turkey and Israel and do you have any ideas as to how to mend it?

I remain concerned about the deterioration of the relationship between Turkey and Israel, both of which are important partners for the U.S. and are critical to stability in their region. These relationships are broader than this dispute. Turkey is a critical NATO Ally, and we will continue to exercise, plan, and work with Turkey in that context. Israel is a key security partner of the United States. If confirmed, I would work to ensure that the U.S. continues, in diplomatic channels and in defense contacts, to encourage both Turkey and Israel to take the steps necessary to resolve their dispute and work together to address common regional challenges.

58) Kosovo

Approximately 760 U.S. troops remain in the Balkans as part of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) that first deployed to Kosovo in 1999 and today is comprised of over 5,500 personnel from 30 countries. Spikes in violence in 2011 required the deployment of the NATO Operational Reserve Force battalion of approximately 600 soldiers to bolster KFOR and maintain a secure environment. Progress is required in both the military and political realms before further troop reductions can be made.

What major lines of effort do you think are required to further reduce or eliminate U.S. and NATO presence in Kosovo?

I recognize that the United States has a long-established commitment, together with our NATO Allies, to a responsible, conditions-based drawdown of forces in Kosovo. I understand the Department of Defense continues to work with Allies and NATO military authorities in monitoring and assessing conditions and pursuing carefully developed plans for the eventual drawdown. Ultimately, a political solution is needed to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia and thereby establish lasting security in Kosovo and the region. If confirmed, I will support this effort, both through Department-led engagements, and also by supporting our interagency and international partners to achieve this goal. I understand that a key part of the KFOR military plan, executed by NATO, is to enable a transition of security responsibilities to Kosovo. The U.S. plays a critical role in this effort. If confirmed, I will ensure that DoD provides support for this goal consistent with decisions among the U.S. and our Allies.

In your view, is the EU playing a significant enough role in Kosovo?

The EU is playing a critical role by facilitating high-level dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. This dialogue is broadly supported by the U.S. and our Allies as an opportunity to normalize relations between the two countries. The EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) plays an important role in Kosovo, working to strengthen legal institutions there. The U.S. will continue its support for a robust role by EULEX to fulfill its mandate.

59) Special Operations Forces

The previous two Quadrennial Defense Reviews have mandated significant growth in our special operations forces and enablers that directly support their operations.

What is your assessment of the QDR mandate regarding the mix of responsibilities assigned to general purpose and special operations forces, particularly as it relates to security force assistance and building partner military capabilities?

I agree with the premise that adversaries will continue to seek alternative methods to counter U.S. influence and interests, and that for the foreseeable future the most likely contingencies the United States will face will involve irregular threats. Therefore, I fully support the 2010 QDR's strategic shift toward expanding general purpose forces' capabilities and capacity for these contingencies. The overall flexibility of our armed forces has been greatly improved by investing in key enablers within our conventional force such as: strengthening and expanding capabilities for security force assistance; increasing the availability of rotary-wing assets; expanding manned and unmanned aircraft systems for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; improving counter-improvised explosive device capabilities; and enhancing linguistic, cultural, counterinsurgency, and stability operations competency and capacity.

Do you believe that our general purpose forces need to become more like special operations forces in mission areas that are critical to countering violent extremists?

Countering violent extremism requires employing all of the capabilities of the Department – mixed and matched appropriately – depending on the mission requirements. The experience of the last 10 years is clear that general purpose units and special forces both contribute to countering violent extremists.

Are there certain mission areas that should be reserved for special operations forces only?

Special operations forces (SOF) are a uniquely specialized component of our U.S. armed forces that are trained, organized, and equipped to conduct counterterrorism, unconventional warfare, direct action, special reconnaissance, foreign internal defense, and counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and other designated operation, often in areas under enemy control or in politically sensitive environments. In such operations and environments, SOF provide unique and essential capabilities.

Do you believe that we should further increase the number of special operations personnel? If so, why, and by how much?

I understand USSOCOM is on track to meet the growth mandated by the last two QDRs. If confirmed, I would work with Commander, USSOCOM to better understand the command's missions, pressures, and growth plans.

Special operations forces rely heavily on Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds.

With the drawdowns in Iraq and Afghanistan, what OCO funding for special operations needs to be moved into the base budget to preserve enduring capabilities in your opinion?

I believe we must continue to provide SOCOM with base budget resources sufficient to preserve long term readiness of a global special operations force. I understand that in the FY13 budget the Department moved roughly \$1B from OCO to base funding and the intent is to continue this transition, although the current fiscal and strategic environment make that challenging.

In your view, can the size of special operations forces be increased, while also maintaining the rigorous recruiting and training standards for special operators?

I understand and agree with the concept that special operations forces (SOF) cannot be mass produced, and I fully support USSOCOM's efforts to maintain the quality of SOF operators and support personnel during this current era of SOF growth. Experience has shown that SOF manpower growth of 3%-5% annually can be sustained and will not dilute the force or outpace the required training and support structure. This is the pace USSOCOM has sustained to great effect over the past several years and is on track to sustain this year.

In recent years, special operations forces have taken on an expanded role in a number of areas important to countering violent extremist organizations, including those

related to information and military intelligence operations. Some have advocated significant changes to U.S. Special Operations Command's (SOCOM) Title 10 missions to make them better reflect the activities special operations forces are carrying out around the world.

What current missions, if any, do you believe can and should be divested by SOCOM, and why?

At this time, I do not advocate significant changes to USSOCOM's Title 10 missions. If confirmed, I would work with Commander, USSOCOM to better understand the command's missions, operations, and pressures and if I see that changes are needed I will offer proposals.

Are there any additional missions that you believe SOCOM should assume, and, if so, what are they and why do you advocate adding them?

I do not currently foresee any additional missions that USSOCOM should assume. If confirmed, I would work with Commander, SOCOM to review any additional missions that may be proposed.

What can be done to ensure that indirect special operations missions with medium- and long-term impact, such as foreign internal defense, receive as much emphasis as direct action, and that they receive appropriate funding?

The activities of special operations forces are quite varied, from high-risk strikes and counterterrorist raids conducted in minutes, to training and advising foreign counterparts conducted over months and years. Both require highly skilled operators, trained, organized, and equipped for the task. I believe that each of these activities is a highly valued capability for the U.S. government that should be maintained and, if confirmed, I will ensure that the Department is adequately prepared for both.

60) Unified Command Plan Changes

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

personnel are coming into their areas of responsibility and what they are doing while they are there.

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

It is my understanding that the Department of Defense is considering several initiatives to enhance the organization, training, equipping, and employment of Special Operations Forces to meet future global security challenges, including potential changes to the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and other guidance that establish command responsibilities and relationships. If confirmed, I look forward to seeing the recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and senior civilian leadership and will ensure these proposed changes preserve civilian control of the military principles, establish clear and appropriate command authorities, and support strong interagency relationships.

61) Combating Terrorism

What is your assessment of the threat posed by al Qaeda and associated forces to the U.S. homeland, U.S. interests overseas, and Western interests more broadly? And, which affiliates and associated forces are of most concern?

I assess that the threat posed by al Qaeda to the U.S. homeland has been significantly diminished over the past four years. At the same time, al Qaeda's remaining leadership in Pakistan and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula remain of greatest concern. Additionally, the Arab Spring has created new opportunities for al Qaeda affiliates in Syria and North Africa.

What is your understanding of the Department's role in the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism?

My understanding is that the U.S. Government is engaged in a multi-departmental, multi-national effort, and that key activities that the Department undertakes to support this strategy include: training, advising, and assisting partner security forces; supporting intelligence collection on al Qaeda; conducting information operations against al Qaeda; and, when appropriate, capturing or killing al Qaeda operatives. I understand that the Department also works to help enable our intelligence and law enforcement partners, both in the United States and overseas, in their efforts to counter this threat.

Are there steps the Department should take to better coordinate its efforts to combat terrorism with those of other federal departments and agencies?

Based on my current knowledge, it appears that the Department is properly coordinating its counter-terrorism efforts with the rest of the U.S. Government. I understand that the U.S. military, intelligence community, and law enforcement agencies regularly collaborate on operations, and that departments and agencies constantly share intelligence, with little of the

“stove-piping” that we saw before 9/11. I will look at this closely if confirmed.

62) Intelligence Support for Indirect Activities

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

Do you believe this is true? If so, and if confirmed, how would you ensure that general purpose forces and special operations forces engaged in indirect activities receive adequate intelligence support?

It is my understanding that the Intelligence Community and the Department of Defense continue to expand intelligence support for a full range of military operations – direct and indirect – not only in Afghanistan, but across multiple areas of responsibility. The Department has invested in and employed innovative Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities increasing its intelligence and operations support to interagency and foreign partners in their efforts against emerging threats. The Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community have assisted our partners in Afghanistan, East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Colombia and the Phillipines. I think that U.S. military operations around the world over the past few years have demonstrated that our general purpose forces are the beneficiaries of consistent, timely support from across the Intelligence Community. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that intelligence capabilities are properly aligned across the force for all missions.

63) Section 1208 Operations

Section 1208 of the Ronald Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Public Law 108-375), as amended by subsequent bills, authorizes the provision of support (including training, funding, and equipment) to regular forces, irregular forces, and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations by U.S. Special Operations Forces to combat terrorism.

What is your assessment of this authority?

I understand that the Section 1208 authority has been a very effective tool for U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) conducting counterterrorism operations to build effective security partners. Combatant Commanders strongly support Section 1208.

64) Lord’s Resistance Army

The President notified Congress in October 2011 of Operation Observant Compass (OOC), an operation to support the efforts of Ugandan and other regional militaries to

remove Joseph Kony and other senior leaders of the LRA from the battlefield in Central Africa, and of his decision to send approximately 100 U.S. Special Operations Forces personnel to Central Africa to help regional partners achieve these goals. Despite pressure by the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) and efforts by U.S. Special Operations personnel to support them, elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – including Joseph Kony – continue to operate and commit atrocities against civilian populations in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan. Congress recently passed and the President signed the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013, which reiterated that the ongoing efforts to remove or apprehend Joseph Kony and his top commanders from the battlefield and end the atrocities perpetuated by his Lord's Resistance Army should continue as appropriate to achieve the goals of the operation.

Do you support Operation Observant Compass?

Yes. My understanding is that Department support to regional counter-Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) efforts helps to advance regional security cooperation and security sector reform more broadly. If confirmed, I would seek to continue the U.S. commitment to deepen our security partnerships with African countries and regional organizations by expanding efforts to build African military capabilities through low-cost, small-footprint operations. At the same time, I would work with the Department of State and other U.S. agencies and departments to seek to strengthen the capacity of civilian bodies and institutions to improve the continent's ability to provide security and respond to emerging conflicts. I would also regularly assess and review Department contributions to this mission to ensure the deployment of U.S. personnel is not open-ended.

What is your understanding of the objectives of Operation Observant Compass?

U.S. Special Operations Forces under Operation Observant Compass (OOC) seek to enhance the capacity of local forces to end the threat posed by the LRA. It is my understanding that U.S. military advisors are working with these forces to strengthen information-sharing and synchronization, enhance their operational planning, and increase overall effectiveness.

While OOC is important in the effort to counter the LRA threat, there is not a purely military solution to this problem. If confirmed, I would support the current U.S. policy of pursuing a comprehensive, multi-faceted strategy to help the governments and people of this region in their efforts to end the threat posed by the LRA and to address the impacts of the LRA's atrocities. The U.S. strategy to counter the LRA outlines four pillars for continuing support: increasing the protection of civilians; apprehending or removing Joseph Kony and senior commanders from the battlefield; promoting the defection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of remaining LRA fighters; and increasing humanitarian access and providing continued relief to affected communities.

65) Mass Atrocities Prevention

President Obama identified the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide as a core U.S. national security interest, as well as a core moral interest, in August 2011 under Presidential Study Directive 10.

What are your views on the role the United States plays in the prevention of mass atrocities and genocide?

As President Obama noted in his speech at the Holocaust Museum last April, preventing and responding to atrocities is a critical mission and a core national security interest of the United States. As the President has made clear, we must look at a wide range of tools before military intervention. I support this view: we should make every effort to prevent crises from escalating, through every policy lever at our disposal, including diplomacy, assistance, and financial measures. I understand that the Atrocities Prevention Board has strengthened our efforts by developing more tools with which to work; I support these vital efforts

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

I understand that the Department has played an active role in the work of the Atrocities Prevention Board, working closely with other agencies to develop a range of tools that enhance the USG's ability to prevent and respond to atrocities. I also understand that DoD has strengthened its own capabilities, including by developing formal doctrine on mass atrocity response operations, for the first time, and incorporating atrocity prevention and response into policy and plans. If confirmed, I would continue these efforts.

66) U.S. Force Posture in the Asia Pacific Region

The Defense Department's January 2012 strategic guidance, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century", states that "while the U.S. military will continue to contribute to security globally, *we will of necessity rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region.*" Likewise, the 2010 report of the Quadrennial Defense Review states that the United States needs to "sustain and strengthen our Asia-Pacific alliances and partnerships to advance mutual security interests and ensure sustainable peace and security in the region," and that, to accomplish this, DOD "will augment and adapt our forward presence" in the Asia-Pacific region.

Do you feel the Department of Defense has adequate resources to implement the new January 2012 strategic guidance?

Congress passed and the President signed into law the Budget Control Act of 2011. The President insisted that the resulting defense cuts be driven by strategy and U.S. defense needs in the coming decade. I understand that the FY13 Department of Defense budget was shaped by the strategic guidance and reflects key mission and capability priorities emerging from the strategic review. If confirmed, I would continue to refine the focus of the Department's

spending in future budget cycles and keep it in line with the President's strategic guidance. I believe that the Department is facing hard but manageable cuts. The strategy is executable with the resource levels currently detailed in the Budget Control Act, but the potentially severe cuts stemming from sequestration would seriously threaten the Department's ability to implement the strategic guidance.

What do you see as the U.S. security priorities in the Asia-Pacific region?

The maintenance of peace, stability, the free flow of commerce, and of U.S. influence in this dynamic region will depend in part on an underlying balance of military capability and presence. I believe that as a Pacific nation, the United States should, with its network of Allies and partners, maintain an enduring defense presence in the Asia-Pacific region as a tangible demonstration of U.S. commitment to Asia's continued security and economic development..

What does the “rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region” mean to you in terms of force structure, capabilities and funding?

The rebalance is broader than just military policies and programs; it is about harnessing every element of our national power to sustain a regional order rooted in economic openness, peaceful resolution to disputes, and democratic governance and political freedom, In terms of our force structure the rebalance places a renewed emphasis on air and naval forces while sustaining ground force presence. While rebalancing, it will also be important for the Department to develop new capabilities and investments to respond to changes in the security environment and technical advancements required to maintain an edge, our freedom of action, and ability to project power in the Asia-Pacific region. I believe that the rebalancing to Asia-Pacific is vital for U.S. future interests, but it can be done smartly, using air and sea and geographically distributed ground forces, without sacrificing the needed U.S. presence in the Middle East.

Do you believe that it is a “necessity” to rebalance the U.S. military toward the Asia-Pacific region? If so, why?

I share the President's view that future U.S. economic and security interests will be closely tied to the Asia-Pacific. I have reviewed the Defense Strategic Guidance released last year, and agree that the emerging economic and political dynamism in the Asia-Pacific will require strong and continuous U.S. commitment.

Why, if at all, do you believe it is important for the U.S. military to maintain and even augment its forward presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and what are the advantages to having a forward presence?

A robust U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific has underwritten peace and prosperity in the region for the past 60 years. The Department should be able to assure regional Allies and partners, deter threats to regional stability, and prevail in conflicts if necessary. If confirmed, I would support the Administration's effort to work towards a posture that is more geographically distributed—for example, the movement of forces to Guam and Australia; operationally resilient,

with a focus on our sea based assets; and politically sustainable – meaning we must work with our partners and Allies to address their concerns about U.S. presence, such as in Okinawa.

What is your assessment of the risks and benefits that are likely to result from this shift?

This shift in U.S. posture is meant to continue supporting peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. U.S. forces should be present to effectively assure our Allies and deter potential adversaries. By emphasizing the Asia-Pacific while also focusing on the Middle East, rebalancing will necessarily accept risk in other areas given the resource-constrained environment. I believe the risks associated with this rebalance are manageable. The potentially severe cuts stemming from sequestration, however, would seriously threaten the Department's ability to implement the strategic guidance, including the rebalance.

What changes, if any, in structure, equipment, and training do you believe will be necessary to meet the requirements for general purpose ground forces in an Asia-Pacific strategy?

My understanding is that our military leadership is already working hard to ensure fielded capabilities enable our military personnel to think, train, and, if necessary, fight to succeed in this theater. The Department is already devoting significant effort to understanding how to operate in – or gain access to – those areas where our adversaries may try to deny us access and is developing the required operational concepts to manage that challenge. We will also need to build military-to-military ties and other relationships, as well as language and cultural expertise, to operate effectively in the Asia-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Services, and Office of the Secretary of Defense leadership to assess any additional changes in structure, equipment, and training.

67) China

How would you characterize the current U.S.-China relationship?

I would describe the relationship as simultaneously possessing elements of cooperation and competition. The U.S.-China relationship, of which the defense component is only one part, is one of the most complex and important bilateral relationships in the world. The United States and China are working together to build a cooperative partnership based on practical cooperation in addressing shared regional and global challenges – a commitment President Obama and President Hu made in January 2011. At the same time, China is rapidly modernizing its military and increasingly asserting claims to territory in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

From your perspective, what effect is China's expanding economy and growing military having on the region at-large and how does that growth influence the U.S. security posture in the Asia-Pacific region?

China's expanding economy and growing military are developments the United States, Allies, partners, and all other nations in the region must monitor carefully. On the one hand, China's growth and potential create an opportunity to cooperate where our interests and those of China converge. At the same time, China's rapid rise and the relative lack of transparency surrounding its intentions can be a source of anxiety and concern in the region. If confirmed, I will evaluate the impact of these developments – as well as the impact of other security trends – on requirements for the U.S. defense posture in the region.

What do you believe are the objectives of China's military modernization program?

As I understand it, China is pursuing a long-term, comprehensive military modernization program designed to improve the capacity of its armed forces to fight and win high-intensity regional military operations of short duration. I understand that Taiwan contingencies remain the principal focus of much of this modernization, but there are growing indications that China is developing capabilities for missions that go beyond China's immediate territorial concerns, such as its counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa and noncombatant evacuation operations from Libya.

How do you believe the United States should respond to China's military modernization program?

I believe the United States should continue to monitor developments in China's military modernization while encouraging Beijing to be more transparent about its military and security strategies, policies and programs. The U.S. response to China's military modernization should be flexible and supported by the continued evolution of our presence and force posture in the Asia-Pacific region, the strengthening of our regional alliances and partnerships, the maintenance of our global presence and access, and the modernization of our own capabilities in such areas as countering efforts to deny us access and freedom of action.

U.S-China military-to-military dialogue has been strained over the past several years and efforts to establish and maintain mutually beneficial military relations has been hampered by China's propensity for postponing or canceling military engagements in an apparent effort to influence U.S. actions.

What is your view of the relative importance of sustained military-to-military relations with China?

I believe there is value in sustained – and substantive – military dialogue with China as a way to improve mutual understanding and reduce the risk that miscommunication and misperception could result in miscalculation. If confirmed, I would look for ways to strengthen the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship consistent with our interests and our values.

Do you believe that we should make any changes in the quality or quantity of our military relations with China? If so, what changes would you suggest and, given Chinese resistance to military-to-military dialogue, how would you implement them?

If confirmed, I will seek ways to improve the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship, in terms of the quality and the quantity of exchanges between the armed forces of our countries. I would support continuing to pursue exchanges with the Chinese armed forces at all levels, and I would look to engage in a wide range of areas where we might find common ground to encourage China to act responsibly on the regional and global scene.

68) North Korea

What is your assessment of the current security situation on the Korean peninsula?

North Korea's provocative behavior, large conventional military, proliferation activities, ballistic missile program, and nuclear program continue to present a serious threat to the United States, our regional Allies, and the international community. The opaque nature of the North Korean system, coupled with an uncertain political transition, adds to my concerns. North Korea's December missile launch, which was a violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, provided yet another example of North Korea's pattern of irresponsible behavior. If confirmed, I will work with our Allies and other key partners in the region and internationally to ensure that we can deter and, if necessary, defeat North Korean aggression.

What is your assessment of the threat posed to the United States and its allies by North Korea's ballistic missile and WMD capabilities and the export of those capabilities?

I am concerned about North Korea's WMD and ballistic missile programs because they present an immediate threat to our Allies and partners as well as a growing threat to the United States. North Korea's December launch – using ballistic missile technology – underscores our concerns about North Korea's continued pursuit of a long-range missile program. The United States will continue carefully monitoring, and impede, North Korea's WMD and missile development programs and related proliferation activities. If confirmed, I would ensure that the Department continues working closely with other parts of the U.S. Government to address North Korea's missile and WMD programs, take necessary steps to defend the U.S. and our Allies, and enhance engagement with our Allies to ensure that we can deter and, if necessary, defeat North Korean aggression.

In your view, what additional steps should the United States take to defend against the North Korean ballistic missile threat and dissuade North Korea from its continued pursuit of ballistic missile technology and to stop or slow North Korean proliferation missile and weapons technology to Syria, Iran and others?

The United States should continue to work to prevent North Korea's proliferation of weapons-related technology by advancing international nonproliferation norms and further tightening sanctions aimed at impeding development of North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear programs. This includes cooperating with partner nations to inspect and interdict vessels and aircraft suspected of carrying illicit cargo. The United States should also seek to enhance bilateral and trilateral missile defense cooperation with our ROK and Japanese allies,

particularly in the area of information sharing. If confirmed, I would continue to work to strengthen the international consensus against proliferation; to invest in programs like the Proliferation Security Initiative, which bolsters the will and capacity of partner nations to interdict these dangerous shipments; to increase WMD-related information sharing with international partners; to take necessary steps to defend the United States and our allies; and to ensure that our ballistic missile defenses are able to defeat any North Korean attack.

69) U.S. Contributions to International Peacekeeping Missions

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

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

I support in principle additional contributions of U.S. military personnel to key positions in UN peacekeeping operations where the mission is a strategic priority for the Department and the United States and where our servicemembers can add significant value to the mission effectiveness and efficiencies. I understand that, although we still provide military observers to UN peacekeeping missions, the Department has shifted its contributions almost exclusively to staff officer positions so as to maximize the returns on our investment.

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

The success of UN peacekeeping operations is important to the United States. I believe that the U.S. should continue to provide military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations, especially for key staff positions that help shape the direction and success of the mission. Such support must be practicable and weighed against the potential costs and competing demands for military commitments. If confirmed, I will carefully evaluate the costs of requested UN support against the potential positive impacts and U.S. interests.

70) Department of Defense Counternarcotics Activities

DOD serves as the single lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime foreign shipments of drugs flowing toward the U.S. On an annual basis, DOD’s

counternarcotics (CN) program expends approximately \$1.5 billion to support the Department's CN operations, including building the capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and certain foreign governments, and providing intelligence support on CN-related matters and a variety of other unique enabling capabilities.

In your view, what is the appropriate role of DOD in counterdrug efforts?

It is my understanding that the Department plays an important role in U.S. counterdrug efforts in support of the National Security Strategy, the National Drug Control Strategy, and the Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime. The Department supports and enables U.S. agencies and foreign partners to be more effective in executing their respective counternarcotics responsibilities. In the Western Hemisphere, the allocation of Department of Defense capabilities in support of U.S. law enforcement interdiction efforts has helped remove hundreds of tons of cocaine and deny billions in illicit revenues to transnational criminal organizations. I believe this support role is a sensible and effective indirect approach.

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

Drug trafficking is by far the world's most lucrative illicit activity and therefore is often used as a source of revenue by terrorists, insurgents, and other actors threatening our national security. In my view, the consequences of narcotics flows beyond U.S. borders – for example, the role of drug trafficking in Afghanistan and the surrounding region is of particular concern to the Department. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, other agencies in the U.S. government and military commanders to address the flow of illegal narcotics as it affects U.S. national interests.

71) National Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime

The Director of National Intelligence recently described transnational organized crime as “an abiding threat to U.S. economic and national security interests,” and stated that “rising drug violence and corruption are undermining stability and the rule of law in some countries.” In July 2011, the President released his Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. One of the priority action areas designated in the strategy is “enhancing Department of Defense support to U.S. law enforcement.”

In your view, what role should DOD play in combating transnational organized crime and in training and equipping partner security forces that have been tasked with combating it?

By law, the Department is the lead federal agency for detection and monitoring of the aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the United States. In the Western Hemisphere, the Department of Defense coordinates the efforts of the U.S. interagency and regional partners in the detection and monitoring of illicit aerial and maritime drug shipments towards the United

States. It is my understanding that beyond that, the Department's role is to contribute unique capabilities in support of law enforcement, other U.S. Government departments and agencies, and international partners. That support takes multiple forms: military intelligence support to law enforcement; military-to-military capacity building; broader capacity building support to foreign partner security services (including police forces); and counter threat finance support. I believe the Department should continue to focus on delivering unique capabilities in support of other departments and agencies that have the lead for combating transnational organized crime.

72) Counter Threat Finance

DOD and the Intelligence Community (IC) have begun investing more resources in identifying and tracking the flow of money associated with terrorist networks and illicit trafficking, but the opportunities for tracking and degrading illicit financing flows are not yet matched by the effort and resources devoted to them. Identifying and disrupting key individuals, entities, and facilitation routes enabling the flow of money that supports terrorism, production of IEDs, narco-trafficking, proliferation, and other significant national security threats could have an outsized impact on confronting these threats.

What are your views on the role of DOD in counter threat finance activities?

Our nation's adversaries, from drug traffickers to terrorists or insurgents, rely upon the flow of money to enable their activities. All available U.S. Government tools should be employed to track and disrupt the finances that support these groups, and the Department can bring unique tools to bear. My understanding is that the Department is not the lead U.S. agency in counter threat finance, but does work with other departments and agencies, and with partner nations, to fight our adversaries' ability to access and use global financial networks. For example, the Department has worked with the Intelligence Community and other interagency partners to identify and disrupt our adversaries' finances and remove key sources of insurgent funding in Afghanistan. I believe the Department should continue to work with law enforcement agencies to ensure military support is targeted, tailored, and in line with defense priorities.

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

My understanding is that the Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell has been successful at disrupting illicit networks in Afghanistan through broad interagency cooperation. The Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization's quick reaction and innovation has saved countless American lives. I believe that the capabilities involved in network disruption are worth institutionalizing into the Department. If confirmed, I will work with the Department's senior leadership and the interagency on this worthy effort.

In your view, how should the Department of Defense coordinate and interface with other key agencies, including the Department of Treasury and the Intelligence Community, in

conducting counter threat finance activities?

My understanding is that the Department works closely with the National Intelligence Manager for Threat Finance as well as the Department of Treasury's Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis. The Department also supports other U.S. Government departments and agencies and with partner nations to deny and disrupt adversaries' ability to use global licit and illicit financial networks to affect U.S. interests negatively. I believe the Department should continue to support law enforcement agencies, the Department of the Treasury, and the Intelligence Community with unique Department of Defense capabilities, including planning, intelligence analysis and tools, and the integration of intelligence into operations.

73) Central America and Mexico

During a March 2012 Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the Commanders of U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command discussed the increasingly dangerous region along the northern and southern borders of Mexico and the devastating impact transnational criminal organizations are having on the people and security of southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador. The United States has increased its assistance in this region, but – to date – the Department of Defense has had only a small role.

What are your views on the threats posed by transnational criminal organizations in this region?

It is clear that transnational and domestic criminal organizations and gangs undermine the security of citizens in many parts of the Western Hemisphere. The influence of criminal elements has brought an increase in violence as well as an increase in narcotics and other illicit trafficking. The root causes of violent crime and insecurity are also influenced by endemic poverty and lack of economic opportunity, weak government institutions, and widespread corruption and impunity. Central America has become one of the most violent regions in the world, and this can be largely attributed to the influence of these elements. Criminal influences threaten regional stability and the fundamental security of an area that lies very close to the United States. I believe the U.S. has a clear interest in helping partner nations strengthen their security institutions consistent with U.S. values. **What is your assessment of DOD's role and current activities in Mexico and Central America?**

I have not had a chance to fully assess these issues, but I am aware that the Department is building defense relations with Mexico based on mutual interest. I am also aware that the Department has a wide range of activities and initiatives with partner nations in Central America, consistent with our values, shared interests and our partner's capacity. My understanding is that that engagements in both Mexico and Central America are broadly focused on defense planning and institutional reform, human rights training, counterdrug support and humanitarian assistance activities. I believe these roles and activities are appropriate to support our policies and strategies in the region, which focus on efforts to strengthen law enforcement, governance and rule of law institutions, while improving economic and social conditions that can contribute to

insecurity.

What changes, if any, would you propose to DOD's current role and activities in this region?

If confirmed, I would need to conduct a thorough review before being able to propose specific changes to the Department's roles and activities in this region. In general terms, however, I am supportive of leveraging the longstanding military-to-military relationships within the region to ensure our partner nations' defense institutions are capable and remain responsive to civil authorities, while being respectful of human rights.

74) Interagency Collaboration

The collaboration between U.S. Special Operations Forces, general purpose forces, and other U.S. Government departments and agencies has played a significant role in the success of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations in recent years. However, much of this collaboration has been ad hoc in nature.

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

The importance of unity of effort and action remains one of the most critical lessons the nation has learned from its experiences with counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. I believe that effective interagency collaboration can greatly improve the U.S. Government's preparedness to operate effectively in all phases of conflict. If confirmed, I will prioritize efforts to ensure interagency collaboration is as robust and effective as possible.

How do you believe these efforts can be improved?

Interagency collaboration can always be improved. Ensuring that the U.S. military plans and trains with its civilian counterparts in other U.S. departments and agencies, and vice-versa, is one way to increase our unity of effort in the field. We also need a strong interagency planning process to ensure effective use of expertise from across the U.S. Government that recognizes each department's and agency's unique role and capabilities. I believe that robust civilian capabilities and resourcing are critical to achieving national security objectives and will be vital to the success of future operations.

How can the lessons learned in recent years be captured in military doctrine and adopted as "best practices" for future contingency operations?

My understanding is that the Department has a variety of efforts devoted to capturing and disseminating best practices within the Department and to the interagency. The importance of institutionalizing lessons learned from the past ten years of war was highlighted in the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance. If confirmed I will continue this emphasis.

75) Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), among other actions, realigned the responsibilities for budgeting for and management of intelligence organizations between the Secretary of Defense and the head of the Intelligence Community, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

What do you believe is the role of DOD in intelligence under IRTPA?

The role of the Department of Defense, including the defense intelligence components, is clearly outlined in law. Under Titles 10 and 50 of the United States Code, the Secretary of Defense has broad responsibility for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities conducted by the Department's components. In addition, under Title 50, the Secretary has several specific statutory responsibilities for elements of the Intelligence Community that are part of the Department of Defense, including the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, and the National Reconnaissance Office. Consistent with the DNI's statutory responsibilities, the Secretary of Defense is responsible for the continued operation of those elements as effective organizations within the Department for the conduct of their missions in order to satisfy the requirements of the Department and the Intelligence Community.

The Secretary, in consultation with the DNI, is also responsible for ensuring that the budgets of the intelligence community elements that are within the Department are sufficient to satisfy the overall intelligence needs of the Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commanders, and other departments and agencies. The Secretary is also responsible for the timely response of intelligence community elements within the Department to the needs of operational military forces. The Department strengthened its management of defense intelligence in 2002 by designating the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)) as lead for its intelligence reform efforts and Principal Staff Assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense regarding intelligence, counterintelligence (CI), and security matters.

As a former member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, I have seen first-hand how the Intelligence Community and all its elements have become better integrated and cooperative and, if confirmed as Secretary of Defense, I look forward to furthering that cooperation.

Do you believe that the IRTPA strikes the correct balance between the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary and the DNI?

Yes, I believe the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary and the DNI are well balanced under the IRTPA. The IRTPA appropriately provided the DNI strong authority to oversee and direct the implementation of the National Intelligence Program. As such, the DNI is responsible for establishing requirements and developing budgets as well as setting objectives and priorities for collection, analysis, production, and dissemination of national intelligence. The responsibility for execution of Department of Defense intelligence activities remains with

the Secretary. The Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence also holds the position of the Director of Defense Intelligence in the Office of the DNI; the position was established to enhance integration, collaboration and information sharing. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense, I will reinforce this strong and effective relationship with the DNI.

What changes in the IRTPA, if any, would you recommend that Congress consider?

As of now, I would not recommend any changes to the IRTPA. If confirmed, I would address any proposed changes should the need arise.

76) Strategic Reviews

What is your understanding and assessment of the DOD processes for analysis, decision making, and reporting results for each of the following strategic reviews:

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) (section 118 of title 10, United States Code);

The QDR is statutorily required, and sets a long-term course for the Department by assessing the opportunities and challenges that the nation faces in the emerging global security environment. It provides an important opportunity to clearly and concisely articulate the national defense strategy and identify priorities for defense policy and force planning. Given the new defense strategy and the fiscal challenges the nation is facing, I believe the upcoming QDR will be critical in setting the future path of the Department.

The National Military Strategy (section 153 of title 10, United States Code);

The National Military Strategy outlines the ways and means for our military to ensure national security based on guidance from the National Security Strategy and the QDR. Section 153 of title 10 of the U.S. Code requires the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to assist the President and Secretary of Defense in providing strategic direction for the Armed Forces. Because the Chairman prepares the National Military Strategy in consultation with the Combatant Commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I believe that it is the best military advice available for the Secretary of Defense. The Chairman also provides an annual risk assessment based upon the most current National Military Strategy.

Global Defense Posture Review (section 2687a of title 10, United States Code);

My understanding is that the Department continuously reviews U.S. Global Defense Posture based in part on Combatant Command submissions of annual Theater Posture Plans. The Department has an executive-level oversight body, the Global Posture Executive Council (GPEC), composed of senior leaders from across the Department and including the Department of State. This body provides analysis and recommendations to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense. The Department submits an annual report to Congress that provides an overview of global defense posture strategy and the status of key overseas posture realignment

actions. My assessment, at this time, is that the GPEC offers an appropriate forum for comprehensive analysis of key overseas posture issues.

The Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review (section 118b of title 10, United States Code).

The Quadrennial Roles and Missions (QRM) review is a statutorily required review of the roles and missions of the Armed Forces and the Department's core competencies and capabilities to perform and support these missions. My understanding is that the QRM is required every 4 years, most recently in 2012, and accordingly will be due again in 2016 submitted with or before the President's budget submission for the next fiscal year. I believe that the next few years will be very dynamic – both in world events and how our military can and should respond – and that the next QRM review will be very important to capturing the consequences of those changes.

If confirmed, what recommendations would you make, if any, to change title 10, United States Code, and to improve DOD's processes for analysis, policy formulation, and decision making relative to each review above?

Based on my current understanding, at this time I would not request any changes to Title 10, U.S. Code. If confirmed and after reviewing Department processes relating to each review, I will make recommendations to Congress and the White House accordingly.

The QDR must examine the national security strategy as most recently updated by the President's January 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance (DSG). Noteworthy, the DSG states that the "tide of war is receding".

Do you agree with that assessment and, if so, how might that influence your analysis and recommendations with regard to strategic priorities in the QDR?

I agree that, with the drawdown of the war in Iraq and transition of security responsibilities in Afghanistan, our future security challenges will be defined less by the wars of the past decade and more by emerging complex threats. The Department remains committed to security in Afghanistan and Iraq, and our counter-terrorism mission will remain a priority for the foreseeable future, but the Department needs to begin focusing on the mix of skills and capabilities and new technologies that will be needed in the future. The QDR should, therefore, examine the current and future security environment, to include changes since the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance was released, and adjust strategic priorities as appropriate.

Section 118 in title 10 United States Code also requires the QDR to identify the budget plan that would be required to provide sufficient resources to execute successfully the full range of missions called for in that national defense strategy at a low-to-moderate level of risk, and any additional resources (beyond those programmed in the current future-years defense program) required to achieve such a level of risk. The law also requires the QDR to make recommendations that are not constrained to comply with and are fully independent of the budget submitted to Congress by the President.

If confirmed, how would you propose to structure the Department's QDR analysis and recommendations to address these two requirements?

It would be my intent, if confirmed, to oversee a QDR process that begins with an assessment of U.S. interests, opportunities, and challenges, and concludes with the development of a defense program and budget designed to meet the resulting defense objectives we set at a low-to-moderate level of risk. If confirmed, I would intend to provide my honest appraisal of the resources required for defense.

In your view, is there analytical and/or practical value in a defense strategy that is unconstrained by or independent of the current budget request or fiscal environment?

I think we must be aware of the fiscal environment when determining our defense strategy just as the strategy is informed by other important environmental factors, such as trends in military technology. That strategy must ensure that the U.S. military is be capable of meeting crucial national security priorities across the range of current and future potential threats.

77) Tactical Fighter Programs

Perhaps the largest modernization effort that we will face over the next several years is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program to modernize our tactical aviation forces with fifth generation tactical aircraft equipped with stealth technology.

Based on current and projected threats, what are your views on the requirements for and timing of these programs?

Dominance in the air is essential to the success of our forces. I understand that the F-35, which will replace several older generation aircraft in the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps, is intended to provide that dominance well into the future. I have not looked at the projected threats in detail; however I believe that other nations, notably China and Russia, have programs to build advanced aircraft that will challenge our current capabilities in the coming years. My view is that we cannot let any other nation achieve parity with the United States in the ability to control the air.

What is your assessment of whether the restructuring of the JSF program that we have seen over the past several years will be sufficient to avoid having to make major adjustments in ether cost or schedule in the future?

I know that the Joint Strike Fighter is the Department's largest acquisition program and that it has experienced significant cost increases and schedule slips. I understand that the Department has already taken steps to tighten the contract terms for the F-35 and restructured the program in 2012 to reduce concurrency, the risk of being in production before development is finished. I have not had the opportunity to review this program or its restructuring in detail. If confirmed, I will make it a high priority to examine the health of this program to determine if it

is on a sound footing and ensure the aircraft are delivered with the capability we need and a cost we can afford.

78) Navy Shipbuilding

Today's Navy is at its smallest size in decades and could decline further without additional shipbuilding efforts. Over the past several years, successive Chiefs of Naval Operations have concluded that the Navy requires a fleet of at least 313 ships to perform its mission. Despite this conclusion, the President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2013 proposed the decommissioning of nine ships - two dock landing ships and seven cruisers designed to last another 10 to 15 years, in order to address defense budget constraints and growing operating costs. Congress rejected the proposal noting the Navy's initial investment of \$11.6 billion in the nine ships and the fact that cutting them creates unnecessary and unaffordable future shipbuilding requirements.

What are your views regarding the CNO's conclusions about the appropriate size and composition of the fleet, and the adequacy of the Navy's current and projected plans to deliver that inventory of ships?

A strong and capable Navy is essential to meet our nation's strategic requirements across the spectrum of operational demands. Therefore, the Navy needs a broad set of capabilities among the mix of ships in its inventory. I understand the Chief of Naval Operations is currently analyzing the Navy shipbuilding goal and will present his analysis shortly. If confirmed, I will review these recommendations for the Navy's current shipbuilding plan and work with the Navy to ensure we have the right size, mix, and usage of our naval forces to meet our strategic goals.

In your opinion, how important is the requirement for a 313 ship fleet on the ability of the Navy to support the national military strategy?

I understand that the Navy's presently stated requirement is for a 313 ship fleet, but I do not yet know all the details of the mix and capabilities of our present and future fleet. I do know the United States requires a capable Navy that is robust enough to execute the full range of missions called upon by our Combatant Commanders in support of the National Security Strategy and Defense Strategic Guidance – including operating persistently across the globe, securing freedom of access, responding to crises, and projecting power into denied areas. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy and Congress to ensure naval forces are appropriately structured to meet our national defense needs.

Do you believe the Navy can meet its goals for the size of the fleet in the current budget climate?

I believe the President's Budget request for Fiscal Year 2013 allowed the Navy to meet its current plan for the size of the fleet. However, the budget environment that we all are dealing with has introduced a good deal of uncertainty for the future of each of the Armed Services. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations to

understand the impact of budget levels on the size of the fleet and how we work within the budget constraints to still meet mission requirements.

79) Aircraft Carriers

The Department of Defense has repeatedly reaffirmed that the U.S. is committed to maintaining a fleet of 11 nuclear powered aircraft carriers despite budget pressures, and maintaining two carriers on patrol in the Middle East. Yet, recent press accounts cite concerns by the Navy to maintain the carrier deployment schedule due to declining budgets. The Chief of Naval Operations recently stated "Right now, we are committed to providing two carrier strike groups in the Arabian Gulf through March. We've been doing this since 2010, and we're committed to that, as I said, through this March. We need to take a look at that, and we will be, with the Joint Staff and the services to see if we need to continue this."

What is your view of the impact of maintaining two carriers in the Arabian Gulf on U.S. strategic goals in the region?

The Carrier Strike Group is a premier instrument supporting the warfighter and demonstrating U.S. resolve and commitment to allies around the world. In recent years the Navy has stepped up to meet increased demands to support operations in the Middle East, as well as to counter other tensions in the region. This support has been critical to our goals in the region. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy to ensure that we allocate our resources to ensure the level of presence necessary to meet our nation's world-wide strategic goals.

What are your views about the requirement to maintain a fleet of 11 aircraft carriers?

I understand that the Department's recent strategic reviews indicate that an 11-carrier force is the correct size to support our current strategy and provide sufficient carrier strike groups to meet overseas presence requirements. However, I also understand that increased Combatant Commander demands for carrier strike groups over the past three years have stressed the carrier force. Carriers are an essential tool given the strategic focus on the Asia-Pacific, an inherently maritime theater, and the Middle East, an increasingly maritime theater, and the requirement to conduct operations in multiple regions simultaneously. If confirmed, I will work with the Navy to ensure that we resource a sustainable level of presence that continues to support the strategic goals.

80) Future Role of the Army

In a speech at West Point in February 2011, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates argued that it is unlikely that the Nation will commit large land forces to future conflicts, and that the Army must "confront the reality that the most plausible, high-end scenarios for the U.S. military [will be] primarily naval and air engagements." Accordingly, the Army will find it difficult to justify the number, size, and cost of its heavy forces. The Defense Strategic Guidance, announced in January 2012,

echoed that prediction and indicated that ground forces would not be sized to conduct large scale long-term stabilization operations.

Do you agree with Secretary Gates assertion that the commitment of land forces, on the scale of Iraq or Afghanistan, is unlikely in the future? Why or why not?

We will continue to need the best Army in the world. But the best Army does not mean the largest. We must have the Army be appropriately sized for the contingencies we deem likely, and it also must be trained and modernized. Our forces must be able to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict and adapt to the security environment as it changes. However, given that we must make choices in today's fiscal and security environment, I agree that large-scale, long-term stabilization operations is an area where we can take risk in the future.

Do you agree that high-end military operations will primarily be naval and air engagements such that the Army will have difficulty justifying the size, structure, and cost of its heavy formations?

The nation needs a robust balance of capabilities in each of the warfighting domains – air, sea and ground. These capabilities can and should be complementary of one another – capabilities in one domain need not come at the expense of those in another. Furthermore, I know from my experience that war is an inherently human endeavor. As long as this nation faces adversaries with large, capable ground forces, the United States will need an Army with diverse and flexible capabilities, which include heavy forces.

General Raymond Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, has stated that the Army will continue to be an indispensable part of the joint force and that there is a synergy that is gained of all the services in order for the military to meet the Nation's needs. He has also said the Army provides more than Brigade Combat Teams -- the Army is the largest contributor to special operations forces and it provides a broad range of essential services to combatant commanders to include intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance; air and missile defense; logistical support; and signal communication support.

In your view, what are the most important considerations or criteria for aligning the Army's size, structure, and cost with strategy and resources?

The most important considerations are our national security requirements. Our security environment and strategy requires the Army to have the appropriate size and structure to be able to support steady-state operations to shape the environment and deter potential adversaries, while simultaneously supporting contingency operations to defeat any potential adversary should deterrence fail.

If confirmed, what actions, if any, would you propose to properly align the Army's size and structure with the requirements of security strategies and the likely availability of resources?

The Department should align the Army's size and structure to the strategy in the same way it would align those of any other component of the joint force: based on appropriate security scenarios, examining the demands of the missions that are most relevant to that component and then determining how best to provide the capabilities required to accomplish those missions. During this period of budget austerity, some tradeoffs across the force may be necessary. If confirmed, I will work closely with military and civilian leaders to balance maintaining the skills needed to meet our most pressing national security demands within the limits of acceptable risk.

81) Army Force Structure

The Defense Strategic Guidance of January 2012 calls for the reduction of Army end strength and force structure over the next five years to 490,000 personnel and eight fewer combat brigades. Army analysis underway and decisions still pending could add a third maneuver battalion to the modular armored and infantry brigades requiring a further reduction in the total number of active component brigades to support such a redistribution of personnel.

If confirmed, what guidance would you give the Army regarding priorities for planning, decisions, and execution with respect to the identification and deactivation of the planned eight and anticipated additional brigade deactivations?

If confirmed, I would provide the same guidance I would give to any Service, which would be to figure out what is in the best interest of the nation's security as expressed in the National Security Strategy and Defense Strategic Guidance. The Army, and the other Services, must use a holistic approach to ensure our forces are organized, manned, trained, equipped and stationed to best incorporate the lessons of the last decade, while remaining ready for the kinds of challenges we will face in the future.

If confirmed, will you prioritize for deactivation those brigades based overseas before those based in the United States?

If confirmed, I would prioritize the selection of brigades for deactivation based on how best to meet the nation's global strategy and objectives while minimizing negative impact on Army families and communities and ensuring we maintain our treaty obligations and commitment to our Allies. I cannot say now whether that results in prioritizing overseas units versus U.S.-based units, but, if confirmed, I will look comprehensively at this issue. I recognize that any force structure reduction will affect Army communities, and I expect that the Army and the Department of Defense will work with those communities to help minimize the impact.

In your view, can the Army's active component end strength be drawn down below the announced and planned reduction to 490,000? If so, what in your view would be the impact on strategic risk, if any, and, in your view would that strategic risk be acceptable or unacceptable?

Independent of size, we must maintain the best Army in the world. If fiscal pressures compel us to consider further reductions of any Service I plan to study tradeoffs and fully understand the risks to our strategy before recommending further cuts. But the size of the force should be driven by mission requirements.

What is your understanding and assessment of the current size and structure of the Army's Reserve Component? If confirmed, what size or force structure changes, if any, would you propose for either the Army Reserve or the Army National Guard?

The Active and Reserve Components of the Army, as parts of the entire force, must be sized and shaped to support our strategy. One of the foundations of the All-Volunteer Force is the Army National Guard with the critical capabilities it provides to the Governors and States, in addition to the tremendous support that it provides for Federal missions at home and abroad. Another foundation is the Army Reserve, which has been a key partner with the Active Army and the Army National Guard throughout many diverse missions. However, as the needs of the nation change, I expect that the capabilities and capacities resident in the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve may also have to change. If confirmed, I will review the results of on-going studies on recommended composition and size before I propose future changes to Reserve Component end strength.

82) Army Modernization

According to a recent study done for the Secretary of the Army by former Assistant Secretary of the Army Gilbert Decker and retired Army General Louis Wagner the Army has sunk \$3.3 billion to \$3.8 billion annually since 2004 into weapons programs that have been cancelled. The report states that, "The Army lacks a credible, quantitative model and process for determining realistic, achievable requirements for modernization and recapitalization given reduced budgets." The Army has implemented many of the recommendations made in the report.

What is your assessment of the Army's modernization record?

I understand that the Army has terminated several large acquisition programs in the past, which gave rise to the study commissioned by Secretary McHugh in 2010. These program terminations were caused by a variety of factors, to include the Army's reliance on immature technologies as solutions to very complex and evolving military requirements. These factors significantly impacted program cost and delivery schedule. I understand that the Army has undertaken efforts to address the root causes of these prior terminations in current and future acquisition programs. If confirmed, I will emphasize the need for sound, cost-informed planning regarding the Army's acquisition efforts and work with the Army to continue to address these root causes.

What actions, if any, would you take to ensure that the Army achieves a genuinely stable modernization strategy and program?

If confirmed, I will closely monitor and oversee the Army's acquisition efforts to ensure that stable and affordable modernization strategies are adopted and implemented. To this end, I will emphasize the need for Army acquisition programs that incorporate sound and realistic development strategies, affordable and technically feasible requirements and – to the fullest extent practicable – adequate and stable resources. I understand that these are necessary ingredients for success in acquisition programs.

What is your understanding and assessment, if any, of the Army's capabilities portfolio review process and its current modernization priorities and investment strategy?

It would be premature for me to currently assess the Army's specific processes for reviewing military requirements or setting modernization priorities. I understand that the Capability Portfolio Reviews are designed to provide a comprehensive examination of Army requirements in an effort to validate their operational value and inform the programming and budgeting processes. This holistic approach makes sense to me, but if confirmed, I will work with Army leadership to review their processes.

What actions, if any, would you take to sustain the momentum of these reviews in stabilizing the Army's modernization strategy and priorities?

If confirmed, I would encourage and support the Army to take any necessary steps to properly define its equipment modernization requirements and priorities. I would closely monitor the outcome of these processes and support the Army's implementation of a successful modernization strategy.

What is your assessment of the Army's implementation of the recommendations of the Decker-Wagner Acquisition Report?

I understand that the actions to implement the approved recommendations in the 2010 report commissioned by Secretary McHugh are either complete or underway. If confirmed, I will review the Army's implementation of the recommendations and work to ensure that they are reflected in ongoing and future modernization efforts.

83) Unfunded Priorities

What is your position on allowing the Service Chiefs to respond to Congress with a list of critical unfunded priorities not included in the President's budget request?

If confirmed, I plan to continue the Department's current policy whereby the Service Chiefs may communicate their unfunded requirements directly to Congress, once they have informed me of those requirements.

84) Ballistic Missile Defense

In September 2009, President Obama announced that he had accepted the

unanimous recommendation of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to pursue a Phased Adaptive Approach (PAA) to missile defense in Europe. This approach is intended to defend all of Europe against existing and emerging threats from Iranian missiles, starting in 2011 and increasing in capability with each of its four phases. Phase 4 of the European PAA is intended to provide a capability to defend against long-range missiles that could reach the United States, thus augmenting the existing homeland missile defense capability.

Do you support the Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense in Europe and, if confirmed, will you implement it?

Yes. I support the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to support implementation of EPAA.

In February 2010, the Defense Department issued its report on the first-ever comprehensive review of U.S. ballistic missile defense policy and strategy, the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR), as required by Congress. The BMDR established a number of policy priorities, including establishing defense against near-term regional missile threats as a top priority of missile defense plans, programs and capabilities. It also stated the policy of sustaining and enhancing the ability of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system to defend the homeland against attack by a small number of long-range missiles by countries such as North Korea and Iran, and of hedging against future uncertainties.

Do you support the policies, strategies, and priorities set forth in the Ballistic Missile Defense Review and, if confirmed, will you implement them?

Yes. I support the Administration's policies, strategies, and priorities as set forth in this review, and, if confirmed, I will implement them.

The two most recent flight tests of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system failed to intercept their targets. The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) formed a Failure Review Board to determine the root cause of the failure and developed a plan to correct it, including flight tests to confirm the correction. Until the flight tests confirm the correction, MDA has suspended production of the Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicles (EKVs) of the type that failed in the previous flight tests, in order to ensure that those EKV's do not contain a flaw that would need to be corrected later.

Do you agree that it is a high priority to correct the failure of the GMD system kill vehicle and demonstrate through flight testing that the system works as intended?

I'm not familiar with the technical details associated with these flight test failures, but in general I would agree that for any system, but especially for a national missile defense system, it is important to correct failures and demonstrate effectiveness as quickly as possible.

Do you agree that it is prudent to verify that the flight test failure problem has been corrected before resuming production of additional EKV's?

I am not in a position to express a technical opinion on the right course of action, but in general it would seem prudent to demonstrate system effectiveness before committing to production. This is in line with the Administration's principle of "fly before you buy."

Do you support the continued enhancement and sustainment of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense system?

I very strongly believe that we should sustain and enhance our national missile defense to protect the nation from limited ICBM attack by states like North Korea and Iran.

Do you support the modernization of the Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicle, which is based on 20 year old technology?

Yes. I understand that the Exo-Atmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) is a key component of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System that we rely on to protect the United States.

Would you agree to study the feasibility, advisability, cost, and potential advantage of deploying additional ground based interceptors in the United States, including at a site located on the East coast of the United States?

I understand that such a study is required by the NDAA and, if confirmed, I will ensure the Department executes the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act direction to analyze potential locations for another CONUS-based missile defense site and to conduct environmental impact surveys.

The United States and NATO are seeking options to cooperate with Russia on missile defense. President Obama has announced that such cooperation would not limit U.S. or NATO missile defense capabilities.

Do you agree that such cooperation could enhance the security of the United States, NATO, and Russia against common missile threats from nations such as Iran?

Yes. I agree that missile defense cooperation with Russia has the potential to enhance the security of the United States, NATO, and Russia. I also agree with President Obama's commitment to ensure that such cooperation will not limit U.S. or NATO missile defense capabilities.

Do you agree that, irrespective of Russian objections, the United States is committed to the continued development and deployment of United States missile defense systems, including qualitative and quantitative improvements to such systems, to defend the homeland, our forward-deployed troops, and allies and partners overseas?

I agree that the United States is committed to continue to develop and deploy missile defenses, including qualitative and quantitative improvements consistent with the Ballistic Missile Defense Review. The President is on record as saying, and I agree, that the United States cannot accept limits on its BMD systems or expose information that would put our missile defense systems at risk. The President has made clear the need to ensure our missile defense systems are capable of defeating the most likely threat we face from North Korean and Iranian missiles. It makes sense to explore approaches to missile defense cooperation that improve transparency and reassure Russia that the U.S. missile defense system does not undermine Russia's strategic deterrent.

85) Space

China's test of an anti-satellite weapon in 2007 was a turning point for the United States in its policies and procedure to ensure access to space. As a nation heavily dependent on space assets for both military and economic advantage, protection of space assets became a U.S. national priority.

Do you agree that space situational awareness and protection of space assets should be a national security priority?

Yes. Space situational awareness is foundational to all space activities, and enables the United States to maintain the strategic advantages we derive from space-based capabilities.

In your view, should China's continued development of space systems inform U.S. space policy and programs?

Yes. U.S. space policies and programs should be informed by China's continued development of space systems, including its multidimensional counterspace program, as well as by the range of other actors that make the space environment increasingly congested, contested, and competitive.

If confirmed, would you propose any changes to National Security space policy and programs?

At this time, I am unaware of any necessary changes and if confirmed, I would plan to continue to implement the President's 2010 National Space Policy and the 2011 National Security Space Strategy. If I find need for changes in the future, I would propose them.

Do you support the space code of conduct as a non-binding agreement among nations that utilize outer space?

Yes. An international code of conduct for space activities – a non-binding arrangement among nations that utilize space – would enhance our national security by helping to maintain the long-term sustainability, safety, stability, and security of space. As more countries and

companies field space capabilities, a code could encourage responsible behavior and single out those who would act otherwise, while reducing the risk of mishaps, misperceptions, and mistrust.

If confirmed, would you commit to reviewing the overall management and coordination of the national security space enterprise?

I understand that there has been a recent reorganization of the management and coordination of the national security space enterprise, including the establishment of the Defense Space Council, and the confirmation of the Secretary of the Air Force as the Executive Agent for Space. This reorganization has resulted in improvements in information flow across the Department and among U.S. departments and agencies, and has also improved the process for acquisition and policy decisions. If confirmed, I will commit to review this reorganization to ensure continued progress.

What is your view on weapons in space?

If confirmed, I would continue to implement the 2011 National Security Space Strategy, which states that “it is in the interests of all space-faring nations to avoid hostilities in space,” and the President’s 2010 National Space Policy, which states that “all nations have the right to explore and use space for peaceful purposes.” The National Space Policy also directs the Secretary of Defense to develop capabilities, plans and options to deter, defend against, and, if necessary, defeat efforts to interfere with or attack U.S. or allied space systems.

The administration is proposing to free up 500 MHz of spectrum for broadband use, a candidate portion of which includes the band 1755-1850 MHz, which is used heavily by Department of Defense and other national security agencies.

Do you support this initiative?

I fully support the national economic and security goals of the President’s 500 MHz initiative to make spectrum available for commercial broadband use, the implementation of more effective and efficient use of limited radio-frequency spectrum and the development of solutions to meet these goals.

Do you support section 1602 of P.L. 106-65, which requires the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to certify that any alternative band or bands to be substituted for spectrum currently used by the Department of Defense and other national security agencies provide “comparable technical characteristics to restore essential military capability that will be lost as a result of the band of frequencies to be so surrendered”?

I fully support Section 1602 of PL 106-65. This provision is absolutely critical to protecting and maintaining our warfighting capabilities. This statutory requirement is intended to ensure the Department is provided access to alternate spectrum before surrendering any spectrum critical for national security capabilities. Any spectrum reallocations and auctions

should provide sufficient time for evaluation and certification of such alternate spectrum so that national security operations are not put at risk.

If confirmed, how do you intend to comply with section 1602 in light of the 500 Mhz initiative?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department continues to conduct operational and cost-feasibility analysis to guarantee that spectrum-dependent national security capabilities are preserved, while supporting the economic benefits spectrum provides to our nation.

Do you intend to insist that DoD be compensated fully for the cost of relocating, if required to do so?

Yes. In order to relocate national security capabilities that rely on spectrum, while maintaining mission effectiveness, the Department must have alternate spectrum with comparable technical characteristics, full cost reimbursement for modifying complex weapons systems, and adequate time to make the transition.

How do you propose the Department make more efficient use of communications spectrum through leasing of commercial satellites?

I understand that both the National Security Space Strategy and the Department of Defense Space Policy indicate that the Department will make use of commercial systems to the maximum extent practicable. I am not familiar with all the details, but will review this more thoroughly, if confirmed.

Do you support more competition in the launch of Department of Defense payloads?

Yes, in general I favor competition in contracting – to include new competitors that can meet certification standards.

If confirmed, what steps will you take to encourage new entrants to the medium and heavy lift launch of Department of Defense payloads while balancing affordability, mission assurance, and maintaining the viability of the existing launch provider?

I understand that the Department has developed criteria to certify new space launch vehicles capable of reliably launching national security satellites and will openly compete up to 14 space launches in the next five years, while guaranteeing the existing launch provider at least 28 launches.

Do you support commercial hosting of Department of Defense payloads and if so how?

Hosted payloads are one of the ways to enhance resilience and assure space capabilities in the congested, contested, and competitive space environment. If confirmed, I would support innovative approaches to improve the national security benefits we derive from space in a

budget-constrained environment, including through the use of hosted payloads.

What is your long term vision and support for the Space Based Infrared Sensing system?

I understand that the Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) provides advanced early warning of hostile missile threats, allowing our warfighters to take swift and precise action. If confirmed, I would support the Department's continued efforts to define the future architecture necessary to provide early warning.

Do you support splitting the systems sensors up to lower overall cost of the system?

I understand that the Department of Defense Space Policy requires the consideration of resilience in space architecture development. Splitting space sensors may be one way to achieve resilience. If confirmed, I will look at options for improving resilience in this system.

86) Strategic Systems

Over the next 5 years DOD will begin to replace or begin studies to replace all of the strategic delivery systems. For the next 15 plus years, DOD will also have to sustain the current strategic nuclear enterprise. This will be a very expensive undertaking.

Do you support the President's intent, stated in his message to the Senate on the New START Treaty (February 2, 2011), to modernize or replace the triad of Strategic nuclear delivery systems?

I support the President's commitment to a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent as long as nuclear weapons exist. I believe that providing necessary resources for nuclear modernization of the Triad should be a national priority. I understand the Department is currently modernizing, replacing, or studying recapitalization options for each leg of the Triad.

Do you have any concerns about the ability of the Department to afford the costs of nuclear systems modernization while meeting the rest of the DOD commitments?

I am not able to make a judgment on this at this time; however, if confirmed, I will assess the costs to ensure that we protect critically important nuclear systems modernization while meeting other defense commitments. We must continue to aggressively scrutinize each of our programs to ensure we maintain critical capabilities in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Department is committed to modernizing our nuclear command and control system, do you support that commitment?

I do. An effective, reliable Nuclear Command, Control, and Communication (NC3) system is a vital component of a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. NC3 systems provide the President redundant and assured capability to execute U.S. nuclear forces under any scenario and are a critical element in ensuring crisis stability and deterrence.

87) United States Cyber Command Personnel Requirements

The Commander of United States Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) in conjunction with the Chiefs of the military services and other elements of DOD, is now seriously engaged in defining the numbers and qualifications of personnel required to conduct the offensive, defensive, and intelligence missions of the Command in support of the combatant commands and the defense of the Nation in cyberspace. Preliminary indications are that the numbers of exceptionally qualified operators are going to be substantial. Secretary Panetta committed to report to the Committee on Armed Services as early as possible this year how the Department would address these serious manpower and training requirements.

Do you believe that the strategy, operational concepts, and operational assumptions that underpin CYBERCOM's force planning have received sufficient critical scrutiny and analysis?

I understand that the Department's leadership has invested significant effort analyzing the threat, reviewing the force planning model, and is currently addressing how to implement the proposed model. If confirmed, I will review this analysis and implementation plan.

Can the military services' current personnel systems and practices produce and sustain the number of highly qualified cyber operators that CYBERCOM believes are required, especially in light of end strength reductions and declining budgets?

Recruiting, training, and retaining military and civilian personnel needed for cyber operations will be a challenge. This is a high priority area for the Department with regard to investment of both resources and management oversight and, if confirmed, I will review these systems and practices.

Should consideration be given to providing the Commander of CYBERCOM personnel authorities similar to those granted to the Commander of United States Special Operations Command?

If confirmed, I will seek the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and senior civilian staff of the Department before recommending any additional authorities for CYBERCOM.

88) Cyber Deterrence

Do you believe we are deterring and dissuading our adversaries in cyberspace?

At this time, it appears that the United States has successfully deterred major cyber attacks. I expect that deterring and, if necessary, defeating such attacks will be a continued key challenge. If confirmed I intend to ensure that the Department provides strong support to our national efforts in this area.

89) United States Cyber Command Status

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has recommended that United States Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) be elevated from a sub-unified to a full unified command. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 includes a Sense of the Congress resolution calling for consultation with Congress before a Presidential decision is made to make CYBERCOM a unified command, and asking for consideration of a number of issues associated with such a decision.

Do you believe it would be advisable to consult with Congress prior to making a decision to elevate CYBERCOM to a unified command?

Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure consultation with Congress.

As the current Commander of the sub-unified CYBERCOM is dual-hatted as the Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), what are your views on the wisdom of having an intelligence officer serve as a unified combatant commander, rather than a line officer with broad training and command experience?

My sense is that dual-hatting the commander of CYBERCOM and the Director of NSA has worked well to date. However, if confirmed, I will review specifics of the dual-hatted relationship and assess whether it should continue in the future. I recognize that NSA support is critical to CYBERCOM's mission given the technical capabilities required to operate in cyberspace. In addition, I recognize that the CYBERCOM commander requires significant understanding of the intelligence community's capabilities and processes to execute his or her missions effectively. However, I am also aware of concerns about the dual-hatted relationship and, if confirmed, will carefully consider these concerns.

Do you believe that CYBERCOM is mature enough to become a unified command, and that policy, strategy, operational planning, and rules of engagement to govern operations in cyberspace are sufficiently developed to justify this step?

My understanding is that the Department has made significant progress since CYBERCOM's creation in 2009. This includes issuance of a comprehensive strategy for military operations in cyberspace. In addition, I am told that CYBERCOM is expanding its integration into the Department's deliberate planning, and that the Chairman, with the approval of the Secretary of Defense, will issue a new set of rules of engagement governing all military operations, including cyber operations, in the near future. If confirmed, I will evaluate the maturity of the command and will consult closely with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Combatant Commanders and Congress prior to any decisions with respect to CYBERCOM.

90) China's Aggressive Theft of U.S. Intellectual Property

A recent report by the National Counterintelligence Executive confirmed the widespread belief that China is engaged in a massive campaign to steal technology, other

forms of intellectual property, and business and trade information from the United States through cyberspace. The current Commander of U.S. Cyber Command has referred to this as the greatest transfer of wealth in history and, along with others, believes this is a serious national security issue.

Do you believe that China's aggressive and massive theft of technology in cyberspace is a threat to national security and economic prosperity?

I believe that the theft of intellectual property and other sensitive information threatens the United States' military advantage and economic prosperity. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and with other departments and agencies to address this threat.

What steps, if any, do you believe are needed to deter China from such activities in the future?

I am not in a position to recommend specific policies, guidance, or changes to authorities at this time. I understand that the Department is enhancing its cyber defense programs and those of certain defense industrial base networks, as well as improving its ability to identify the origins of intrusion. If confirmed, I will consider what diplomatic and public engagement as well as other actions that should be taken to address this challenge.

91) DOD's Role in Defending the Nation from Cyber Attack

What is your understanding of the role of the Department of Defense in defending the Nation from an attack in cyberspace? In what ways is this role distinct from those of the homeland security and law enforcement communities?

My understanding is that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has the lead for domestic cybersecurity. Thus, DHS coordinates national protection, prevention, mitigation, and recovery in significant cyber incidents. The Defense Department provides technical assistance to DHS when requested. The Department's role is to provide the military forces needed to deter the adversary, and if necessary, act to protect the security of the country. This includes planning against potential threats to our critical infrastructure, gathering foreign threat intelligence, and protecting classified networks. I believe that the defense, homeland security, and law enforcement communities should work together, and with our private sector partners to improve network defenses, share information on cyber threats, and ensure swift response to threats when they manifest themselves.

Do you believe that defending the homeland mission will require both offensive and defensive cyber forces and tools?

If confirmed, this is an area I will review closely. My current view is that defending the homeland from cyber attacks should involve the full range of tools at the disposal of the United States, including diplomacy and law enforcement as well as any authorized military operations.

This new mission will require substantial resources, including personnel. How do you envision generating these additional resources in the face of reduced budgets and declining end strength?

The current fiscal situation will force hard choices across a range of priority missions, including cyber. If confirmed, I will consult closely with military and civilian leaders in the Department, the President, and Congress in finding the right balance.

92) Iran

What is your assessment of the military and political threat posed by Iran?

Iran poses a significant threat to the United States, our allies and partners, and our interests in the region and globally. Iran continues to pursue an illicit nuclear program that threatens to provoke a regional arms race and undermine the global non-proliferation regime. Iran is also one of the main state-sponsors of terrorism and could spark conflict, including against U.S. personnel and interests. Iran is also actively investing in the development of a range of conventional capabilities, including air, missile, and naval assets that have generated regional anxieties and could threaten our interests and personnel in the region.

What is your assessment of U.S. policy with respect to Iran?

I believe that President Obama has put in place and pursued effectively – with support from the U.S. Congress – a strong, multi-vector strategy to deal with the threats that Iran poses to the United States, particularly its nuclear pursuits. This strategy has included a strong diplomatic effort to test Iranian intentions, lay the ground work for an international coalition that holds Tehran accountable for its transgressions, and isolate Iran in the region and globally. This strategy has also included the application of smart, unprecedented, and effective sanctions against the Iranian regime that has sharpened its choices significantly. And lastly, this strategy has credibly, and smartly in my opinion, made clear that all options are on the table. I believe that this strategy has made it clear to Iran that the United States will do what it must to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, and I will continue to implement this policy if confirmed.

In your view, what has been the effect of sanctions against Iran – how effective have they been?

I believe that the President with significant help from the U.S. Congress, has been able to bring the world community together to confront Iran with effective sanctions. As a result of these sanctions, Iran's financial, trade, and economic outlook has deteriorated significantly. International financial institutions estimate that Iran's economy contracted in 2012 for the first time in more than two decades. Iran's access to foreign exchange reserves held overseas has diminished. Additionally, the Iranian currency – the rial – reached an all-time low in mid-October, losing more than half its value since the start of 2012. Inflation and unemployment are also growing. As the economic outlook for Iran continues to worsen and as the U.S. continues to reinforce our pressure track along with the international community, I

believe that pressure is building on Iran.

You have said that “Washington should make clear that everything is on the table with Tehran—an end to sanctions, diplomatic recognition, civil nuclear cooperation, investment in Iran’s energy sector, World Bank Loans, World Trade Organization membership, Iraq, Afghanistan, regional security arrangements, etc.—if Iran abstains from a nuclear weapons program, ends support for terrorist groups, recognizes Israel, and engages in more constructive policies in Iraq.”

Do you still hold this view?

I do believe that if Iran lives up to international obligations, it should have a path to a more prosperous and productive relationship with the international community and eventual rejoining of the community of nations. The other choice is clear as well – if Iran continues to flout its international obligations, it should continue to face severe and growing consequences. While there is time and space for diplomacy, backed by pressure, the window is closing. Iran needs to demonstrate it is prepared to negotiate seriously.

In March 2012, President Obama said "when it comes to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, I will take no options off the table, and I mean what I say. That includes all elements of American power: A political effort aimed at isolating Iran; a diplomatic effort to sustain our coalition and ensure that the Iranian program is monitored; an economic effort that imposes crippling sanctions; and, yes, a military effort to be prepared for any contingency."

Do you agree with the President's view that “all options should be on the table” to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon?

I agree with the President that the United States should take no options off the table in our efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. If confirmed, I will focus intently on ensuring that U.S. military is in fact prepared for any contingency.

93) Countering Iran’s Ballistic Missile Threats

Iran has hundreds of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles today that are capable of reaching forward-deployed U.S. forces, allies, and partner nations in the CENTCOM AOR. The Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report of February 2010 stated that the United States intends to pursue a phased and adaptive approach to ballistic missile defense tailored against such missile threats in various regions, including the Middle East.

Do you agree that such a phased adaptive approach will provide CENTCOM with the missile defense capabilities needed to defend our forward deployed forces and our allies and partners in the region against Iranian ballistic missile threats?

While I have not looked into the details of the phased adaptive approach, I believe this approach includes the appropriate steps to protect the United States as well as our forces and interests overseas. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the President continues to propose a budget sufficient to support our ballistic missile defense priorities, balanced with competing priorities, and consistent with the projected capabilities of missile defense systems to deal with the anticipated threats.

What role do you see for the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system with Standard Missile – 3 interceptors in U.S. regional missile defense capabilities against Iran’s ballistic missiles?

My understanding is that today, U.S. Aegis combatants equipped with Standard Missile – 3s are on station and protecting U.S. forces, partners, and allies in the Middle East as well as Europe against Iran’s ballistic missiles. My expectation is that this capability will continue to evolve.

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

Recognizing that global demand for BMD will likely exceed the U.S. supply, it is appropriate for the United States to seek appropriate burden-sharing arrangements with partners and allies in the CENTCOM area and other regions. Such arrangements can increase the quantity of missile defense assets in support of U.S. regional deterrence and security goals. If confirmed, I will encourage those contributions to our mutual defense needs.

The Intelligence Community assesses that, with sufficient foreign assistance, Iran may be technically capable of flight testing an ICBM capable of reaching the United States by 2015. What should the United States do to hedge against this possibility?

I understand that, with the deployed Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system, the United States is currently protected against the threat of limited ICBM attack from states like Iran and North Korea. As noted in the 2010 Ballistic Missile Defense Review, it is important that we maintain this advantageous position by hedging against future uncertainties. If confirmed, I would continue the current efforts to prepare options in case the threat changes or if the development of new technical capabilities is delayed.

94) U.S.-Israel Defense Cooperation

In recent years, the National Defense Authorization Act has supported close cooperation and substantial funding for a number of critical missile defense and rocket defense programs for the state of Israel, including the Arrow system, the Arrow-3 interceptor, David’s Sling, and the Iron Dome system.

In your view, should the United States continue to support such joint cooperation and funding for these programs?

Yes. I am proud of the work that the United States has done in support of the ballistic missile defense of Israel and, if confirmed, I will continue to support these efforts. Missile defense is a core area of U.S.-Israel joint cooperation. The importance of these efforts came to the forefront with Israel's recent Operation Pillar of Defense in Gaza. Throughout the eight days of the operation, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) launched over 1,506 rockets into Israel. Focusing only on those that posed a real threat to populated areas, Iron Dome intercepted 421 rockets with an overall intercept rate of approximately 85% – saving the lives of countless Israeli civilians. This highlights the importance of the work that the U.S. is doing with the Israelis on all layers of missile and rocket defense, and if confirmed, I will work to continue and expand this cooperation.

95) DOD's Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program

The CTR program is focused on eliminating weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the states of the former Soviet Union and other nations around the world. Its key objectives include: (1) eliminating strategic nuclear weapons; (2) improving the security and accounting of nuclear weapons and weapons-usable fissile material; (3) detecting, eliminating and preventing the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons and capabilities; and (4) encouraging development of capabilities to reduce proliferation threats. The current CTR umbrella agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States will expire at the end of May 2013, and it has been reported that the Duma does not support extending the umbrella as it is currently written at this time.

Do you support extending this umbrella agreement?

Yes. On December 3, 2012, President Obama said, "if Russia believes the CTR agreement hasn't kept pace with the changing relationship between our countries, we should update it." If confirmed, I will support continuation of the non-proliferation cooperation with Russia supported by the CTR Umbrella Agreement.

Do you support continued cooperation with the Russian Federation to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in Russia?

Yes. U.S. and Russian efforts to secure and eliminate WMD have made both countries safer, and have proven to be a productive area of cooperation.

Do you support the use of metrics to assess the progress of the CTR programs and to ensure individual programs complete their objectives?

Yes. Metrics are an important tool in ensuring efficient execution of the CTR Program.

In your view, are Russia and the former Soviet Union countries making a significant contribution to efforts to reduce the proliferation threats they inherited?

My understanding is that the Russian Federation and several other states of the Former Soviet Union have contributed in many ways to reduce threats posed by weapons of mass destruction that they inherited. I understand that the Department supports these efforts through the CTR program, which helps secure nuclear materials, destroy chemical weapons, and reduce the threat from especially dangerous pathogens. Russia and several of its neighbors also made important contributions to the Nuclear Security Summits held in Washington and Seoul.

Do you think the CTR program is well-coordinated among the U.S. government agencies that engage in threat reduction efforts in Russia, e.g., the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the State Department?

My understanding is that CTR and other non-proliferation programs executed by federal agencies are coordinated well through the leadership of the National Security Staff. If confirmed, one of my priorities as Secretary of Defense will be to ensure that all of the Department's activities in this area are well-coordinated with interagency partners.

As the CTR program expands to geographic regions beyond the states of the former Soviet Union, in your view what proliferation prevention and threat reduction goals should the DOD establish or focus on?

My understanding is that the President has highlighted nuclear and biological terrorism as key threats, and that the CTR program strongly supports these priorities. I agree with these priorities.

Do you support extending the CTR program to nations in the Middle East, especially with respect to containing Syrian chemical weapons?

My understanding is that the CTR program is authorized to undertake activities in the Middle East. The main objective of this expanded authority is to enhance the capacity of regional partners, particularly the nations that border Syria, to mitigate the threat to their territory posed by the potential loss or use of Syria's chemical weapons. If confirmed, I would continue to support this effort.

Do you support extending the CTR program to nations in Africa, especially with respect to biological materials?

Yes, based on my current understanding, I believe it makes good sense to continue to expand the CTR program's geographic reach beyond the former Soviet Union. Any cost effective steps we can take to keep terrorists from accessing dangerous biological agents by partnering with other nations are especially important in regions like East Africa where active terrorist threats converge with emerging infectious diseases.

96) Prompt Global Strike

The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review concluded that the United States will

continue to experiment with prompt global strike prototypes. There has been no decision to field a prompt global strike capability as the effort is early in the technology and testing phase.

In your view, what is the role for a conventional prompt global strike capability in addressing the key threats to U.S. national security in the near future?

I understand that the Department continues to assess a broad range of conventional strike capabilities to address current and emerging threats. Conventional prompt global strike (CPGS) weapons could provide the President with unique conventional capabilities in certain scenarios that include fleeting or otherwise inaccessible time-sensitive targets for example. I understand, however, that there are concerns about this operational concept. At this point, I believe that it makes sense to assess potential approaches to conventional prompt global strike. If confirmed, I will look forward to further discussions with Congress on this topic.

What approach to implementation of this capability would you expect to pursue if confirmed?

I understand the Department is continuing to conduct research and testing to support the development of concepts and technologies for boost-glide systems that could provide the basis for a conventional prompt global strike capability. If confirmed, I will review implementation options.

Do you support a competitive procurement of prompt global strike systems if they progress to a milestone B stage?

In general, where viable options exist, I think the Department should take maximum advantage of a competitive procurement process.

97) Nuclear Weapons and Stockpile Stewardship

Congress established the Stockpile Stewardship Program with the aim of creating the computational capabilities and experimental tools needed to allow for the continued certification of the nuclear weapons stockpile as safe, secure, and reliable without the need for nuclear weapons testing. The Secretaries of Defense and Energy are statutorily required to certify annually to the Congress the continued safety, security, and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile.

As the stockpile continues to age, what do you view as the greatest challenges with respect to assuring the safety, reliability, and security of the stockpile?

I understand that the Stockpile Stewardship Program has ensured that our nuclear weapons stockpile remains safe, secure, and effective without the use of underground nuclear weapons testing. At the same time, the challenge we face is that some aspects of today's nuclear complex are in need of repair or replacement. If confirmed, I will continue to work

with the Department of Energy to ensure the safety, security, and reliability of our stockpile, and the modernization of the nuclear weapons complex infrastructure.

Do you agree that the full funding of the President’s plan for modernizing the nuclear weapons complex, commonly referred to as the 1251 report, is a critical national security priority?

The modernization of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) infrastructure and life extension of our nuclear weapons are critical to sustaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, I will work to ensure appropriate funding levels and cost-effective management for these efforts, which will require a substantial and sustained fiscal commitment.

Prior to completing this modernization effort, do you believe it would be prudent to consider reductions below New START Treaty limits for either the deployed or non-deployed stockpile of nuclear weapons?

I believe that we should make necessary investments in infrastructure modernization regardless of potential future nuclear weapon reductions. I understand that the New START Treaty does not limit non-deployed warheads; if confirmed I will ensure that the stockpile, including both deployed and non-deployed nuclear warheads, sustains the credibility of the U.S. deterrent, including our commitments to extend deterrence to U.S. allies.

What role does the Nuclear Weapons Council play in helping to establish key stockpile stewardship goals and modernization objectives?

The Nuclear Weapons Council (NWC) is the primary interface for coordinating nuclear weapons enterprise issues between the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy. I understand that its current top priority is to address stockpile life extension and nuclear infrastructure modernization in the current fiscal environment.

Do you support a more active role of the Office of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation (CAPE) in ensuring the programs within the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration are appropriately tailored for the best investment of funds possible to achieve a safe, effective and reliable nuclear weapons stockpile?

I am not familiar enough with the degree of CAPE’s involvement with the Department of Energy and the National Nuclear Security Administration to make that determination at this time. I understand that CAPE has worked closely with NNSA over the past year to review NNSA programs, and if confirmed, will closely consider CAPE’s appropriate role in this regard in the future.

98) Medical Countermeasures Initiative (MCMI)

The Administration has produced an interagency strategy for the advanced

development and manufacture of medical countermeasures (MCM) to defend against pandemic influenza and biological warfare threats. In this strategy, the Department of Defense will be responsible for the rapid development and manufacture of medical countermeasures to protect U.S. Armed Forces and Defense Department personnel.

Do you support this interagency strategy and the MCM Initiative and, if confirmed, would you plan to implement them?

I am very concerned about the threat of biological weapons. I support assigning to the Department the responsibility for protecting the U.S. Armed Forces and Defense Department personnel with rapid development and manufacturing of medical countermeasures. If confirmed, I will need to look into the specific plans associated with the interagency strategy of the Medical Countermeasure Initiative. I would do my best to implement the administration's strategy, consistent with any statutory guidance and available funding.

99) Defense Acquisition Reform

The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 (WSARA) is designed to ensure that new defense acquisition programs start on a sound footing, to avoid the high cost of fixing problems late in the acquisition process.

What are your views regarding WSARA and the need for improvements in the Defense acquisition process?

I believe that our weapons systems acquisition process has substantial room for improvement. My understanding is that WSARA, which enacted a number of steps to improve many aspects of weapons system acquisition, has been largely implemented by the Department and that it is improving the Department's acquisition performance, but that more needs to be done. I am aware the Department is continuing to implement the remaining provisions of WSARA and other acquisition improvement initiatives. If confirmed, I will review these efforts to ensure that they are adequate and I will continue to work with the Congress and our industry partners to improve the way we acquire systems for the Department.

If confirmed, how would you improve all three aspects of the acquisition process B requirements, acquisition, and budgeting?

Close coordination of these three processes is essential to improving the Department's ability to acquire services and systems and to obtain the best value for every defense dollar. Since WSARA's enactment, progress appears to have been made in regard to closer integration of these three processes, but I do not believe that this work is complete. In my view, requirements must be feasible and affordable, there must be an executable plan to acquire the products that meet those requirements, and there must be an adequate budget established to conduct the program and acquire the product. If confirmed, I will work to bring requirements, acquisition, and budgeting into close alignment by ensuring that the individuals responsible for

these three aspects of acquisition work in conjunction with one another and not in isolation.

If confirmed, how would you improve acquisition accountability?

I support a chain of command for the acquisition process that provides for the clear responsibility and accountability that was established by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in the 1980s. For major programs, this chain of command begins with the Defense Acquisition Executive and runs through DoD component head to the Service or Component Acquisition Executive, the Program Executive Officer, and the Program Manager. If confirmed, I will hold these individuals accountable for acquisition system performance.

Do you believe that the current investment budget for major systems is affordable given increasing historic cost growth in major systems, costs of current operations, and asset recapitalization?

I have not yet reviewed DoD's investment budget in detail or the balance between major systems investments, operations, and recapitalization. However, it is clear to me that pursuing only affordable programs and controlling costs throughout a product's life cycle are critical in any financial environment. All programs must be closely managed to avoid cost growth, and the affordability of any new requirements must be carefully scrutinized at the outset - before the program is authorized. If confirmed, I will examine the investment budget closely for near and long term affordability, taking into consideration the potential for cost growth. I will also assess the sustainability of the balance between the various accounts that make up the Department's budget, including the investment, operations, and asset recapitalization portions of the budget.

If confirmed, how do you plan to address this issue and guard against the potential impact of weapon systems cost growth?

My understanding is that the Department has been imposing affordability cost caps on new programs for over two years for both production and sustainment costs. These caps are being used to force trade-offs between capability and costs early in a program's life cycle. If confirmed, I will strongly support the imposition and enforcement of these cost caps. I will also work with the Department and industry to ensure that we stay on budget and on schedule. The Department of Defense and the taxpayer cannot afford the excessive cost growth that has plagued some programs in the past.

100) Reliability of Weapons Systems

The Department's process for procuring major weapons systems places insufficient emphasis on reliability and maintainability and, therefore, produces systems that are increasingly costly to operate and sustain. Given that these ownership costs comprise most of a given weapons systems' overall lifecycle cost, these increased costs could undermine considerably the Department's "buying power."

How would you ensure that the defense acquisition system produces more reliable weapons systems?

I believe that the key to obtaining necessary reliability is to establish effective incentives and, when necessary, to enforce the consequences of failure to meet established standards. If confirmed, I will ensure that the acquisition system takes this approach to achieving the needed reliability performance for its weapons systems.

101) Excessive Concurrency in Major Defense Acquisition Programs

Major defense acquisition programs (MDAPs) have experienced excessive cost-growth and schedule delays due to, among other things, too much of an overlap between development and production. This has exposed these systems to a high risk of costly new discoveries requiring redesign and retrofit late into operational testing or production.

What more can be done to ensure that the defense acquisition system safeguards against excessive concurrency in MDAPs?

I am not an expert in this field; however, my understanding is that some limited degree of concurrency between development and initial production can often be the most efficient way to structure a weapons system program. However, the Department has in some cases, such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, taken too much risk with concurrency, committing to production well before the design was tested enough to know that it was mature and stable. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the risks of concurrent development and production are fully understood and taken into account by acquisition decision makers before a program enters production.

102) Procurement Program Risk

Another major cause of excessive cost growth and schedule delays in how the Department procures major weapons systems and major automated information systems (in particular, “enterprise resource planning” (ERP) systems, which are vital to defense financial improvement and business transformation), relates to the Department’s inability to identify, price, and therefore effectively manage program risk, e.g., technological, developmental, integration, and manufacturing risk).

How would you improve the defense acquisition system to ensure that the Department can more effectively and timely address all types of risk in its major defense procurement programs to better ensure the delivery of needed combat capability on time and on budget?

I believe the early identification, management, and mitigation of program risk is a critical element of any well-managed acquisition program. I understand that the Department, through implementation of WSARA and other ongoing initiatives, is working to improve early planning efforts to better understand risks and to put in place steps that will remove and/or mitigate them prior to the commitment of a major investment in product development or initial production.

My view is that new product development inherently involves risk and that the risk of any new product development must be actively managed if the program is to be successful. If confirmed I will review the adequacy of these initiatives and their effectiveness.

103) Services Contracting

Over the last decade, the Department has become progressively more reliant upon contractors to perform functions that were once performed exclusively by government employees. As a result, contractors now play an integral role in areas as diverse as the management and oversight of weapons programs, the development of personnel policies, and the collection and analysis of intelligence. In many cases, contractor employees work in the same offices, serve on the same projects and task forces, and perform many of the same functions as DOD employees.

In your view, has DOD become too reliant on contractors to support the basic functions of the Department?

Although I understand that DoD has been taking steps in recent years to reduce its reliance on contractors, I believe DoD must continue to manage its workforce in a way that avoids inappropriate or excessive reliance on contractor support for basic Department functions, while also meeting its obligations to perform work efficiently and effectively and to be a good steward of taxpayer resources. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department implements a workforce strategy that aligns functions and work among military, civilian, and contracted services in a cost effective, and balanced manner consistent with workload requirements, funding availability, and laws and regulations.

If confirmed, how do you plan to address the issue of cost growth in services contracting and ensure that the Department gets the most for its money in this area?

If confirmed, I will continue the efforts of the Administration and the Department to improve the visibility and accountability of contracted services by expanding and refining the data we collect from contractors, as required by statute, in order to compare it to our civilian and military workforce planning factors.

U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have relied on contractor support to a greater degree than previous U.S. military operations. According to widely published reports, the number of U.S. contractor employees in Iraq and Afghanistan has often exceeded the number of U.S. military deployed in those countries.

Do you believe that the Department of Defense has become too dependent on contractor support for military operations?

At this time I don't have enough information to make an assessment. While many support functions for military operations are appropriate for contract support, some are more closely associated with work that should be performed by government employees (military or civilian),

or other federal agencies. I am aware of recent recommendations made by the Commission on Wartime Contracting and the GAO regarding such dependence and, if confirmed, I will support ongoing efforts to implement those recommendations as appropriate.

What risks do you see in the Department's reliance on such contractor support? What steps do you believe the Department should take to mitigate such risk?

Reliance on contractor support can lead to operational risk if contractors fail to perform or perform outside the scope of appropriately defined roles. Our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan have also shown that additional risk is introduced when there is poor government oversight, further increasing the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse. We also know that government oversight is critical to ensure appropriate contractor interaction with local communities.

If confirmed, I will support the Department's ongoing efforts to minimize any over-reliance on contractors and ensure the appropriate mix of military, civilian, and contract personnel in theater. I will also review the Department's progress in implementing recommendations made by the Commission on Wartime Contracting, the GAO, and the legislative mandates in the NDAA regarding operational contracting requirements including considerations for contract support as part of the national military strategy, the Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Chairman's annual risk assessment.

Do you believe the Department is appropriately organized and staffed to effectively manage contractors on the battlefield?

I do not have enough information yet to make a full assessment of this issue. However, I believe that investments made over the last few years in the Department's acquisition workforce, as well as the implementation of recommendations made by the Commission on Wartime Contracting and the GAO, have vastly improved the Department's ability to effectively manage contractors on the battlefield. If confirmed, I will continue to improve our capabilities in this critical area.

What steps if any do you believe the Department should take to improve its management of contractors on the battlefield?

At this time I don't have enough information to identify specific steps or actions necessary to improve management of contractors on the battlefield. If confirmed, I will work with the Chairman, the Joint Chiefs, the Combatant Commanders, and other Department leadership to ensure commanders in the field have the necessary resources and access to information to effectively manage contract support and mitigate against potential risks.

104) Private Security Contractors

Federal agencies including the Department of Defense have spent more than \$5 billion for private security contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last decade. Over this period, there have been numerous reports of abuses and questionable activities by

private security contractors in both countries.

Do you believe the Department of Defense and other federal agencies should rely upon contractors to perform security functions that may reasonably be expected to require the use of deadly force in highly hazardous public areas in an area of combat operations?

I believe it may be appropriate to use private security contractors for specific security functions in contingency operations when they are limited by specific rules for the use of force. Such functions include providing security for our military bases in areas of operations and protecting supply convoys. Without a significant increase in end strength and resources, the Department would not have the capacity to take on all the missions private security contractors are able to fill. However, the Department must provide proper guidance and supervision when using private security contractors and must ensure they do not engage in combat operations. I cannot comment on the use of private security contractors by other federal agencies.

In your view, has the U.S. reliance upon private security contractors to perform such functions risked undermining our defense and foreign policy objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan?

The use of private security contractors in support of contingency operations always requires careful oversight. The misapplication of the use of force by private security contractors can undermine our strategic objectives. If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of Defense has established policies and procedures to effectively manage private security contractors to prevent actions that would be detrimental to our policy objectives.

Section 846 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 requires the Department of Defense to carry out risk assessments and risk mitigation plans whenever it relies on contractors to perform critical functions in support of overseas contingency operations.

What steps will you take, if confirmed, to implement the requirements of section 846?

I believe that contract support is an essential part of the total force and will remain so in the future. In many cases contractors are absolutely vital. For example transportation command heavily uses contractors to move personnel and equipment. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of Defense policy and operational guidance addresses the requirements of section 846 and that proper risk assessments and risk mitigation plans are conducted.

What steps if any would you take, if confirmed, to ensure that any private security contractors who may continue to operate in an area of combat operations act in a responsible manner, consistent with U.S. defense and foreign policy objectives?

If confirmed, I will ensure the Department of Defense has policies that effectively guide the operations of private security contractors when they are used, and that we provide proper

oversight. We must also strive to ensure that all contractors, including private security contractors, are appropriately legally accountable for their actions, and that private security contractors that operate in an area of combat and contingency operations act responsibly.

105) Efficiency in Department Operations

The Joint Chiefs recently stated that, “we must be given the latitude to enact the cost-saving reforms we need while eliminating the weapons and facilities we do not need.”

In your view, what latitude must be given to the Joint Chiefs to enact cost-saving reforms?

It is my understanding that the Joint Chiefs supported some hard choices that were made in the FY13 President’s Budget in order to achieve the savings required to sustain the new defense strategy. The Joint Chiefs need Congress to provide them the latitude to implement those changes and allow them to execute the new strategy. I also understand that it is now a zero sum game. If the Department is not able to implement the changes proposed, other offsets must be made, while still preserving warfighting capability.

If confirmed, how would you work with the Joint Chiefs to eliminate unneeded weapons?

If confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to sit down with the Joint Chiefs and to work together to thoroughly review, identify, and eliminate any effort that is outdated or no longer needed by the Department.

Do you support the Administration’s request for the authority to conduct two rounds of Bases Realignments and Closures (BRAC) to eliminate unneeded facilities?

I understand that the Administration’s proposal for two rounds of BRAC was not accepted by Congress. However, I also think any prudent manager has to look at all options when faced with significant budget pressures. As with industry, the Department should examine its infrastructure and eliminate excess. The BRAC process is not perfect, but I believe BRAC is a fair and comprehensive way to right-size the Department’s footprint, and is the best process identified to date. If confirmed, I would have to look at the need for BRAC in the future.

If so, given the recent report by the Government Accountability Office of the excessive costs of the 2005 BRAC round, what would be your priorities in carrying out a round of BRAC?

It is my understanding that the 2005 BRAC round was an anomaly, the only round conducted while the Department was growing. It focused on transformation, jointness and relocating forces from overseas. A future BRAC round is more likely to be like the rounds in 1993 and 1995 where excess capacity was reduced.

106) Acquisition Workforce

Over the last 15 years, DOD has reduced the size of its acquisition workforce by almost half, without undertaking any systematic planning or analysis to ensure that it would have the specific skills and competencies needed to meet DOD’s current and future needs. Since September 11, 2001, moreover, the demands placed on that workforce have substantially increased. Section 852 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 established an Acquisition Workforce Development Fund to help the Department of Defense address shortcomings in its acquisition workforce. This requirement was revised and updated by section 803 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

Do you agree that the Department would be “penny-wise and pound foolish” to try to save money by cutting corners on its acquisition workforce at the risk of losing control over the hundreds of billions of dollars that it spends every year on the acquisition of products and services?

Yes. It is imperative that the Department of Defense act as a good steward of the resources entrusted to it by the American people. A properly qualified and sized acquisition workforce is central to maintaining this stewardship and to ensuring that the Department obtains as much value as possible for the money that it spends obtaining products and services from contractors.

Do you believe that the Acquisition Workforce Development Fund is needed to ensure that DOD has the right number of employees with the right skills to run its acquisition programs in the most cost effective manner for the taxpayers?

I understand that the Acquisition Workforce Development Fund has provided funds necessary for strengthening the acquisition workforce with regard to both its size and skills. I support this goal and, if confirmed, will work with the Congress to ensure that the Fund is used effectively to build the capability of the Department’s acquisition workforce.

107) Human Capital Planning

The Department of Defense faces a critical shortfall in key areas of its civilian workforce, including the management of acquisition programs, information technology systems and financial management, and senior DOD officials have expressed alarm at the extent of the Department’s reliance on contractors in these areas. Section 115b of title 10, U.S. Code, requires the Department to develop a strategic workforce plan to shape and improve its civilian employee workforce.

Would you agree that the Department’s human capital, including its civilian workforce, is critical to the accomplishment of its national security mission?

Yes, I agree. The civilian workforce performs key enabling functions for the military, such as critical training and preparation to ensure readiness, equipment reset and modernization. Civilians also provide medical care, family support, and base operating services - all vital to supporting our men and women in uniform.

Do you share the concern expressed by others about the extent of the Department's reliance on contractors in critical areas such as the management of acquisition programs, information technology and financial management?

Yes. We must ensure that we have a properly sized, and highly capable, civilian workforce that maintains critical skills and prevents an overreliance on contracted services. If confirmed, I will support the Administration's focus on reducing inappropriate or excessive reliance on contracted support.

If confirmed, will you ensure that the Department undertakes necessary human capital planning to ensure that its civilian workforce is prepared to meet the challenges of the coming decades?

Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure Departmental human capital planning employs strategies for recruitment, development, and retention of a mission-ready civilian workforce.

Section 955 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 requires a five percent reduction in anticipated funding levels for the civilian personnel workforce and the service contractor workforce of the Department of Defense, subject to certain exclusions.

What impact do you expect the implementation of section 955 to have on the programs and operations of the Department of Defense?

I do not have enough information at this time to speak to potential impact. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department's implementation of section 955, both in the civilian and contracted support workforces, is done in a manner that best mitigates risk to programs and operations, while maintaining core capabilities and support to our warfighters and their families.

What steps will you take, if confirmed, to ensure that section 955 is implemented in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of section 129a of title 10, United States Code, for determining the most appropriate and cost-efficient mix of military, civilian and service contractor personnel to perform DOD missions?

If confirmed, I will ensure implementation of section 955 recognizes that the sourcing of work among military (both Active and Reserve Components), civilian, and contracted services must be consistent with requirements, funding availability, and applicable laws.

What processes will you put in place, if confirmed, to ensure that the Department implements a sound planning process for carrying out the requirements of section 955, including the implementation of the exclusion authority in section 955(c)?

If confirmed, I will review the current processes the Department has for workforce determinations, along with existing management structures and tools. I do not currently have enough information regarding possible specific exclusions, but will ensure that the workforces of the Department are sized to perform the functions and activities necessary to achieve the missions of the Department.

108) Test and Evaluation (T&E)

If confirmed, will you make it a priority to ensure that the Department as a whole and each of the Services specifically maintains its testing organizations, infrastructure, and budgets at levels adequate to address both our current and future acquisition needs?

Yes. Test and evaluation is a critical element of our acquisition system, that providing the measured and objective insight into a system's performance that is essential to making sound programmatic decisions.

A natural tension exists between major program objectives to reduce cost and schedule and the T&E objective to ensure performance meets specifications and requirements. What is your assessment of the appropriate balance between the desire to reduce acquisition cycle times and the need to perform adequate testing?

Test and evaluation provides acquisition decision makers with accurate and objective information on system performance necessary to inform critical acquisition decisions. My view is that we should generally not gamble on the performance of a weapons system when a reasonable amount of testing will significantly reduce the risk of redesign or major changes after production has been started. If confirmed, I will closely monitor the balance between reducing acquisition cycle time and conducting adequate testing to ensure warfighters receive affordable, operationally effective, and suitable systems when they need them.

Under what circumstances, if any, do you believe we should procure weapon systems and equipment that has not been demonstrated through test and evaluation to be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable?

I understand that test and evaluation plays a critical role in product development and fielding. I believe that there are only a limited number of cases where it might be necessary to field a system prior to operational testing – for example, to address an urgent gap in a critical operational capability in an ongoing or imminent conflict. Even when fielding is accelerated to meet an urgent need, applicable statutes governing the test process must be complied with. There must be some level of testing to ensure basic operational performance and the safety of the system and to evaluate the system's capabilities and limitations to identify any deficiencies that might need to be corrected.

Congress established the position of Director of Operational Test and Evaluation to serve as an independent voice on matters relating to operational testing of weapons

systems. As established, the Director has a unique and direct relationship with Congress, consistent with the statutory independence of the office.

Do you support the continued ability of the Director of Operational Test and Evaluation's to speak freely and independently with the Congress?

Yes.

109) Funding for Science and Technology (S&T) Investments and Workforce

In his State of the Union speech in 2010, the President said that "maintaining our leadership in science and technology is crucial to America's success." The DOD budget submissions for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 supported continued investment in science and technology, despite the significant budget pressure.

Do you support maintaining growth in the DOD's S&T investments?

I understand and appreciate the importance of government investment in science and technology in the area of national security. Maintaining technological superiority against current and projected adversaries underpins our national security strategy and it is only through this investment that we can sustain this critical edge. I fully support the President's commitment to science and technology, and if confirmed, I will work to support science and technology investments in our defense budget.

How will you assess whether the science and technology investment portfolio is adequate to meet the current and future needs of the Department?

If confirmed, I anticipate conducting reviews of the Department's current science and technology investment strategy, in the context of the Department's priorities and capability needs. I also acknowledge the necessity of maintaining a strong technology base.

Well over half of all graduates of U.S. universities with advanced degrees in science and technology are non-U.S. citizens. Due to a variety of reasons, many return to their home countries where they contribute to competing against the U.S. in technology advancement.

What is your view on steps that the Department should take, if any, to ensure that DOD and the defense industrial base are able to recruit and retain scientists and engineers from this talent pool?

In order to maintain our technology superiority, it is essential for the Department to attract the best and brightest minds. The President made clear in his recent inaugural address that including bright students and engineers from abroad in America's workforce is an imperative for our future. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and the Administration to find ways in which the Department could enhance its skilled workforce, to include its scientific and

engineering segments, by drawing upon a broad talent pool and by seeking to recruit and retain the best possible individuals, within the construct of national security requirements.

110) Defense Industrial Base

The latest Quadrennial Defense Review addressed the need for strengthening the defense industrial base. Specifically, it said: “America’s security and prosperity are increasingly linked with the health of our technology and industrial bases. In order to maintain our strategic advantage well into the future, the Department requires a consistent, realistic, and long-term strategy for shaping the structure and capabilities of the defense technology and industrial bases—a strategy that better accounts for the rapid evolution of commercial technology, as well as the unique requirements of ongoing conflicts.”

What is your understanding and assessment of the current state of the U.S. defense industry?

I understand the Department relies on a broadened technical and industrial base that is now far more global, commercial, and financially complex than ever before. For the past decade the defense industrial base has enjoyed a period of increasing budgets that is now at an end. While I think our industrial base is currently strong, I am concerned about the impact that further defense budget cuts would have on the ability of the base to provide the broad range of products and services that the Department and our nation need. If confirmed, the continuing health of the industrial base will be a high priority for me.

Do you support further consolidation of the U.S. defense industry?

Expansion and consolidation of industries and companies is the hallmark of a robust free market economy as it responds to the market forces. I expect, and encourage, the free market to act when faced with changing demands. However, I believe the government must also be watchful for consolidations that eliminate competition or cause market distortions. At the end of the Cold War there was a major consolidation at the top tier of defense businesses. My understanding is that the Department’s leadership have indicated that further consolidation at the top tier would not be viewed favorably. I have not studied this in detail; however, my initial assessment is that this is the correct view. I also believe that each individual case of consolidation, acquisition, or merger dealing with our defense firms must be examined carefully for what is best for the warfighter and the taxpayer, particularly with regard to its impact on competition.

What is your position on foreign investment in the U.S. defense sector?

Foreign investment has generally benefitted the United States, including the Department of Defense, by providing needed capital and increasing access to leading-edge technologies. However, I believe foreign investment in the defense sector can also expose critical national defense-related technologies to risks, including loss of the intellectual property that gives our

military personnel the technological edge they rely upon. Congress has put provisions in place to address critical national security concerns of this nature, including the Committee on Foreign Interests in the United States (CFIUS) led by the Department of the Treasury. If confirmed, I will continue the Department of Defense's commitment to its oversight function and to ensuring that national security concerns are addressed in transactions that involve foreign investments in the U.S., including investments in the defense sector.

If confirmed, what steps if any do you believe the Department of Defense should take to most effectively and efficiently manage risk and ensure the continued health of the U.S. defense industrial base?

If confirmed, I would seek to ensure the sources of manufacturing and services in the industrial base that the Department relies on are capable of meeting our warfighters' requirements. I will ensure that the Department proactively monitors the base to identify any risks that need to be addressed. When necessary and as resources permit, the Department should be prepared to act to ensure that key industrial capabilities are sustained, although, unfortunately, this will not be possible in every case. I will also make myself accessible to the best source of information on the industry's concerns – industry itself. This means working closely and communicating with private industry to ensure that, as the Department makes changes necessary to adapt to a new set of strategic and budgetary challenges, it does not inadvertently jeopardize critical elements of the industrial base. I believe the Department must simultaneously be receptive to industry's concerns and address their issues as effectively as possible, consistent with the Department's priorities and the resources available.

111) Reset and Reconstitution Funding

The Department has a substantial backlog of maintenance availabilities due to the high tempo and demand of more than a decade of combat operations. Senior DOD officials have testified that they will require 2-3 years of additional funding to restore readiness through reset and reconstitution of their equipment and personnel.

Do you agree with the assessment that the DOD will need 2-3 years of additional funding for reset and reconstitution?

I would need to review the facts behind the specific estimate of 2-3 years; however, I believe that it will require considerable time to repair equipment returning from operations in Afghanistan because of the nature of the repairs and difficulty of removing the equipment from theater.

If confirmed, how will you balance maintenance and reset requirements with fiscal realities and future risk in developing your budget request?

The goal of reset and reconstitution is to produce ready units with the equipment they need for contingencies or current operations. Any further budget cuts must be balanced against this need for ready units, and, if confirmed, I will work with the services to prioritize the

readiness of the units needed to implement the President's strategy.

112) Operational Energy

Last July, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Operational Energy Plans and Programs published a policy that any alternative drop-in replacement fuel procured for DOD-wide use and distribution within the Class III (Bulk) supply chain must compete with petroleum products and any awards will be based on the ability to meet requirements at the best value to the government, including cost.

What is your view of this policy?

I understand this policy to be a positive one. It is prudent for the Department to engage in tests and demonstrations that confirm defense equipment can operate on a range of fuels; however, as the Department allocates its limited resources to ensure it delivers necessary warfighting capability, it should only buy large volumes of these fuels when they are cost-competitive with petroleum products.

What is your assessment of Section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and how it should apply to military operations of the Department of Defense?

My understanding is that Section 526 has not restricted the Department from purchasing whatever fuel it has needed to support military operations. Rather, Section 526 applies only to contracts that are for the express purpose of buying alternative or synthetic fuel. As long as mission capability is not restricted, it is helpful to have this guidance that new fuels should not be any more polluting than fuels produced from conventional petroleum sources.

Considering the potential of further cuts to Defense budgets and the importance of energy security, do you believe the Department of Defense should jointly invest with other government agencies in the construction of a commercial biofuels refinery?

I understand the Department is in the early planning stages of such a project, undertaken in partnership with the private sector and the Departments of Energy and Agriculture, which have the lead roles for the federal government in promoting biofuels. I have not reviewed this project; however, I believe the nation's long-term energy security would benefit from a competitive, domestic renewable fuels industry - the Department has a long history of contributing to national innovation by innovating to meet the defense mission. As a major consumer of liquid fuels, the Department would benefit from that industry as well. That said, I am not yet in a position to comment on the trade-offs between the value of this investment and the other priorities of the Department. Given the Department's funding constraints, I would, if confirmed, examine the value of this investment carefully before authorizing it to proceed.

If confirmed, what priorities would you establish for Defense investments in energy technologies?

My broad priorities for defense energy investments will be those that: increase military capabilities, provide more mission success, and lower total cost. If confirmed, I will focus on both operational effectiveness and efficiency – improving the energy performance of aircraft, ships, ground vehicles, and military bases; reducing the vulnerability of our fuel supply lines; lowering the load our expeditionary forces must carry; and diversifying the energy supplies we use.

113) Law of the Sea Convention

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

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

I strongly support U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention. Ratification would allow the United States to take its rightful place and enjoy the benefits and protections of this treaty.

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

Becoming a party to the Law of the Sea Convention would enhance the U.S. security posture around the globe in several significant ways. First and foremost, accession would enable the United States to reinforce all of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea codified in the Convention, including the navigational and over-flight rights that are critical to the global mobility of U.S. forces as well as the right to submit extended continental shelf claims that would help us preserve the rights to potential resources. Additionally, accession would help the United States to promote a common rules-based approach among other nations to peacefully resolve their territorial and maritime disputes, particularly in East Asia. Further, accession would add to the Department's credibility in a large number of Asia-focused multilateral venues where Law of the Sea matters are discussed. Lastly, accession would reassure some nations who have expressed concerns of the legality of cooperative security efforts that United States supports, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. The United States has longstanding interests in freedom of the seas and respect for international law, and our accession to the Convention would further demonstrate our commitment to those national interests.

114) Congressional Oversight

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

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.