

THE NOMINATION OF DR. COLIN H. KAHL TO  
BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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MARCH 4, 2021  
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Printed for the use of the Committee on Armed Services



Available via: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

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U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

62-871 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2026

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## **THE NOMINATION OF DR. COLIN H. KAHL TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021**

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in Room SD-106, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Jack Reed (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members present: Senators Reed, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Warren, Peters, Manchin, Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Inhofe, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Blackburn, Hawley, and Tuberville.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR JACK REED**

Chairman REED. Good morning. The Committee meets this morning to consider the nomination of Dr. Colin Kahl to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USDP). Dr. Kahl has had a long and distinguished career in public service, including multiple positions at the Department of Defense. In addition, he has a close relationship with the White House, having served as Vice President Biden's National Security Advisor.

Dr. Kahl, I want to thank you for your willingness to once again serve your country and the Defense Department. I also recognize and thank Michèle Flournoy, who previously served as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and who will be introducing Dr. Kahl this morning.

During his nomination hearing before this committee, Secretary Austin made clear that the next Under Secretary of Defense for Policy will play a central role in the Secretary's efforts to empower the Department's civilian staff, and ensure that strategic and operational decisions are informed by policy.

If confirmed, Dr. Kahl, you will face a wide range of challenges to global security. Foremost among these is the re-emergence of strategic competition with near-peer rivals, China and Russia. We must adapt to a new security environment in which our adversaries are rapidly modernizing their military capabilities and are increasingly aggressive in challenging United States and allied interests. Our Armed Forces must be prepared to operate in contested environments if our deterrent is to remain credible. This great power rivalry will significantly impact our defense policies across the board.

We must take a long-term approach to the strategic competition with China, a challenge Secretary Austin has appropriately described as the “pacing threat” for the Department of Defense (DOD). Competing effectively with China requires that we develop new technologies to rival China’s advancements and new operational concepts to ensure the desired deterrent effect against Chinese aggression.

Russia continues to subvert the rules-based international order, including using military force to intimidate and coerce its neighbors and other countries. Russia is also engaged in an ongoing hybrid warfare campaign just below the threshold that would provoke a military response, including disinformation campaigns targeting democratic processes, human rights abuses, and assassination attempts against Kremlin opponents.

In addition to these broad strategic challenges, the new administration must contend with regional destabilization in the Middle East and South Asia, areas in which Dr. Kahl has extensive experience. These complex, interlocking challenges include deterring threats from Iran, and its proxies, while seeking to contain the Iranian nuclear threat; recalibrating the relationship with Saudi Arabia; and continuing to mature the security relationship with Iraq while keeping pressure on ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria]. In Afghanistan, the administration is reviewing adherence to the May 1st troop withdrawal timeline in the midst of an uptick in Taliban violence across the country.

The shift to great power competition has been accompanied by a call for a more resource-sustained approach to counterterrorism. The Biden administration has an opportunity to develop a sustainable policy framework for the conduct of counterterrorism operations that ensures transparency, seeks to enable foreign partners, emphasizes the avoidance of civilian harm, and reserves unilateral use of lethal force for only those instances where it is absolutely necessary.

The Department is also confronted with a number of non-traditional threats, from disruptive technologies including cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and advanced digital communications, to the substantial threat climate change poses to our force posture and military operations. This may require new policies and organizational structures within the Department to respond to these emerging threats.

Addressing these problems will require a comprehensive security strategy, one that brings together all national elements of power in a whole-of-government approach. The Policy Office will have the lead in working with the State Department and other civilian agencies to ensure a unified effort on these critical national security matters. Dr. Kahl, I hope you will share your views on the role of the Department of Defense in such a coordinated, interagency approach.

Finally, another key component of our defense policy going forward must be ensuring a unified approach with our allies and building strong partnerships globally. Our allies and partner nations are force multipliers, providing us a significant advantage in the strategic competition. The Biden administration has pledged to reinvigorate these relationships, which have been badly shaken in

recent years, leaving our allies and partners wondering whether they can rely on U.S. leadership of the international community. I will be interested to hear how you see the role of allies and partners in the U.S. security strategy, and how, if confirmed, you would rebuild the bonds with our defense partners.

I look forward to your testimony, and let me recognize Senator Inhofe.

#### STATEMENT OF SENATOR JIM INHOFE

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Kahl, I want to begin by thanking you for your willingness to serve. You have been nominated for one of the most senior positions at the Pentagon, and you previously served in high positions in the Obama administration. But to be clear up front, from a policy perspective, I do not think there is much we are going to agree on, as we discussed on the phone last week.

Now, in regards to our discussion last week, we had a conversation. Apparently someone who was listening went to the press and claimed that you and I, and we are quoting you, “said all the right things” and “may have flipped Inhofe and his concerns.”

First, I think I was pretty clear that we had significant disagreements, so I am not sure how you got that impression, or he got that impression, or who it was. Second and most importantly, I am disappointed that a slanted view of our conversation was shared with the press. There is no reason for that.

On our call, I told you that I would have a hard time supporting your nomination because of your previous policy positions, unless you have learned from some of the mistakes that you have made, which I will point out. But I also told you that I can work with people with whom I disagree, and people are always talking about that with me and Barbara Boxer. We got more stuff done than any other two people who did not agree on anything except infrastructure, but it worked.

I understand that my committee staff has gotten assurances that this leak did not come from you, but it did not come from me either, so who did it come from?

Hopefully you can touch on this issue at some point during today’s testimony. Even if we disagree on policy issues, we have to have some trust that we can have frank conversations, and that would be necessary.

So now I want to discuss some of those areas where you and I have disagreed.

Specifically, you had previously been against moving the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, yet my recent amendment to the reconciliation bill, which ensures that the Embassy will remain in Jerusalem, passed by a vote of 97–3—those are Democrats we are talking about, along with Republicans—and the Biden administration has already confirmed it will remain there also.

You have also been a vocal supporter of the Obama administration’s Iran nuclear deal, which gave Iran over \$100 billion in sanctions relief, part of which Iran used to fund terrorist groups, the very groups that rocketed American forces in Iraq just this week.

Now, as I have said, my colleagues and I are used to disagreeing with senior officials over various policy matters. That is not new.

We had a very good hearing on Tuesday about global security challenges and strategy. At this hearing, H.R. McMaster said something about our foreign policy that I think is really important. He said, and this is a quote, he said, “We need to adopt a nonpartisan, long-term approach to foreign policy focused on competitions important to our nation’s security, prosperity, and influence in the world.” Great statement.

What concerns me here is that hyper-partisanship, especially in regards to our national security, is inappropriate for the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. We are talking about the number three position.

We have seen this before, even with the previous administration, when this committee rejected a nominee, in part, due to his prior statements and hyper-partisanship.

The position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy requires a leader with judicious temperament and sound judgment. National security is too important for partisan politics.

Unfortunately, in the past, in many cases, your public policy positions have been couched in partisan politics rather than fact-based analysis. I will give you just a few examples because I expect my colleagues will have other examples. I will just give you two here.

You downplayed the threat of Russia when Mitt Romney highlighted it during the 2012 election, and then alleged numerous conspiracy theories regarding President Trump’s ties to Russia following the 2016 election. Next, you appeared to promote the fabricated Steele dossier, which contains ludicrous and unsubstantiated accusations against President Trump.

I realize you were not in public service when you made these comments, and maybe at the time you thought you would never be sitting in front of us as you are today.

My point is this. We know that there is a new administration—we understand that. I did not want it but it is here—and that we will have policy disagreements that we will all try to work through. But how will you rectify the fact that many Americans, including those who work at the Department of Defense, know you only through your very partisan comments? How can we be confident that you will be a model of nonpartisan policy analysis, which is what the job requires, if you are confirmed?

Finally, just to hit on some of your previous policy predictions that have proven untrue, you said that ending the Iran deal might lead to war, and that did not happen. You said the Soleimani strike would force the United States out of Iraq. That did not happen. You wrote that it would be “difficult” to prevent a “massive war” on the Korean peninsula in 2018. That did not happen. You said that moving the United States Embassy to Jerusalem would harm relations with Arab states, and, in fact, Arab-Israeli relations have never been better.

So here is what I hope you will address during the hearing. What prior assumptions have you reconsidered? Where do you stand on these matters now, and how will you comport yourself in the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy if you are confirmed? Where do you stand on these matters now, and how will you comport yourself on these policies? How can you reassure this com-

mittee that your hyper-partisan advocacy will not drive Pentagon decisions?

We have got a lot to discuss, and I thank you for being here today and your willingness. I sounded a little bit upset on this, and frankly, I am.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Inhofe, now let me recognize former Secretary of Defense, Michéle Flournoy, via WebEx, to introduce Dr. Kahl, and then after that I will ask the required questions of Dr. Kahl before his testimony.

Secretary Flournoy, are you ready?

Ms. FLOURNOY. Yes, I am.

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, distinguished members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, it is truly an honor and a pleasure for me to introduce my dear friend and former colleague, Dr. Colin Kahl as President Biden's nominee to be the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. The Under Secretary for Policy is a position I know well, and it plays a critical role in the Department of Defense. As you know, it is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense in the formulation of national security and defense policy and the oversight of military plans and operations and the National Security Council (NSC) deliberations. The Under Secretary's Office oversees the drafting of National Defense Strategy and other key guidance documents and often represents the Department in engagement overseas, with allies, and the media, and before Congress.

I have known Dr. Kahl for nearly 15 years, and I cannot think of anyone who is more qualified and better suited for this position, particularly at this consequential moment for our country. Dr. Kahl is both a respect policy expert and an extraordinary leader and practitioners. Since receiving his BA in political science from the University of Michigan and his PhD in political science from Columbia University, his career has alternated between being a professor at the University of Minnesota, Georgetown, and now Stanford, and serving his country in the Department of Defense and in the White House.

During the Obama administration, Dr. Kahl served as Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice President. In that position, he advised President Obama and Vice President Biden on all matters related to United States foreign policy and national security, from China and Russia, Ukraine, North Korea, Central America, to cyber, climate, Ebola, and the counter-ISIS strategy. He has an incredible breadth and depth of both policy and interagency experience at the highest levels, all of which will serve him very well in the Department.

Prior to that, Dr. Kahl worked with me as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East at the Pentagon. In this capacity, he served as the Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Defense for all of the countries in the Levant and Gulf region. In this role, he delivered some incredibly important outcomes for Secretary of Defense Gates, for President Obama, for the U.S., and our allies.

A few examples. In the summer of 2009, he wrote the initial memo that advocated for United States support for Israel's Iron

Dome rocket defense system, which had been languishing at the Pentagon for years. This got the ball rolling at the NSC, culminating in hundreds of millions of dollars, thanks to the Congress, in support of a system that helped cement our defense relationship with Israel and, in fact, saved countless Israeli lives since then.

Dr. Kahl also spearheaded DOD efforts to bolster the [inaudible] to counterbalance Iran while, at the same time, safeguarding Israel's qualitative military edge, a feat that he was able to manage by building extraordinarily close security ties with both our JCC partners and his counterparts in Israel.

At the same time, he helped oversee the contingency planning for Iran and worked alongside the interagency and United States Central Command (CENTCOM) to enhance and adjust our military posture throughout the region to deter Iranian aggression and support diplomacy to constrain Iran's nuclear program. Throughout, he worked in close partnership with CENTCOM and the Joint Staff, modeling the kind of collaborative civil-military relationship we need more of today.

For these and his other extraordinary contributions, Dr. Kahl was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service by Secretary Robert Gates in June of 2011.

Dr. Kahl understands that these positions require not just drafting good policy but also actually ensuring that these policies are implemented, to deliver real security benefits for the nation. He was exceptional in his ability to develop a vision and road map for his area of responsibility, to work closely with key civilian, military, interagency, international, and I would add, congressional on both sides of the aisle, stakeholders, to get their buy-in and support, and then drive the delivery of outcomes. Dr. Kahl has a record of being a leader who gets results.

He is also a leader who wins the respect and admiration of his peers and his subordinates. When I was Under Secretary, we launched a human capital strategy and policy to boost the morale and enhance the performance of the workforce. I decided to pilot the program in the two busiest offices, including Dr. Kahl's Middle East office, to demonstrate that it is possible to take care of your people even as you maintain high-tempo operations.

The pilot was a stellar success, thanks to Dr. Kahl's gifts as a leader and a manager of people. At a time when the policy organization needs to be rebuilt and reinvigorated, these skills will be critical to the next USDP's success.

Thanks to his time in academia, and think tanks like the Council on Foreign Relations and the Center for New American Security, Dr. Kahl will also bring a tremendous reservoir of intellectual capital to the position. He has published numerous articles on international security and foreign and defense policy, and has spent the past few years working on a number of projects, ranging from a book on the geopolitical consequences of COVID-19, a project on the implications of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning on strategic stability and the future of deterrence, and a project providing a theoretical and historical analysis of American grand strategy since 9/11.

I believe Dr. Kahl has the expertise, the experience, the ability to work with all stakeholders, no matter whether they agree or dis-

agree with him—the leadership qualities to be an exceptional Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. I would urge you confirm him as quickly as possible, because the Pentagon needs his help. Thank you so much.

Chairman REED. Thank you so much, Madam Secretary, not only for your statement but for your dedicated service to the nation in so many different ways.

Dr. Kahl, I will ask you a series of questions before we recognize you for your statement.

Have you adhered to applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Chairman REED. Have you assumed any duties or taken any actions that would appear to resume the outcome of the confirmation process?

Dr. KAHL. No.

Chairman REED. Exercising our legislative and oversight responsibility makes it important that this committee, its committees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive testimony, briefings, reports, records, and other information from the Executive branch on a timely basis. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear and testify before this committee when requested?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Chairman REED. Do you agree to provide records, documents, and electronic communications in a timely manner when requested by this committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress and to consult with a request regarding the basis of any good-faith delay or denial in providing such records?

Dr. KAHL. I do.

Chairman REED. Will you ensure that your staff complies with deadlines established by this committee for the production of reports, records, and other information, including timely responding to hearing questions for the record?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Chairman REED. Will you cooperate in providing witnesses and briefers in response to congressional requests?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Chairman REED. Will those witnesses and briefers be protected from reprisal for their testimony or briefings?

Dr. KAHL. They will.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Dr. Kahl, and please go ahead.

#### **STATEMENT OF DR. COLIN H. KAHL, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY**

Dr. KAHL. Well, thank you and good morning, Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the committee. It is a true honor to appear before you today.

I would like to thank President Biden for my nomination. I would also like to thank Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks for their confidence, and of course, to my good friend Michèle Flournoy for her kind introduction.

Michèle has been a mentor to me and so many others over the course of her distinguished career, and I am grateful for her years

of support and friendship. As Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, she set a high bar for policy acumen, skillful management, unshakeable integrity, and principled, nonpartisan leadership, and if confirmed, I aim to emulate her example.

I would also like to thank my wife Rebecca and my two amazing children, our nine-year-old daughter Nora and our six-year-old Rylan, for all their love, their support, and frankly, their patience through this process. I wish they could be here sitting behind me today, but I know they cheering me on back home in California, so if you are watching on TV, Daddy says hello.

I was born and raised in OSD Policy, and I could not be more humbled by the prospect of leading this great organization. I began my government career as an action officer in the Pentagon during the Bush administration. I returned to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East during the Obama administration, working for both Secretary Gates and then Secretary Panetta.

While the challenges we face as a nation have changed, the role of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy remains just as critical as ever.

Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have pledged to empower the Policy team. If confirmed, I commit to be a strong, constructive civilian voice in the Department. I have the utmost respect for our military professionals at all levels, and I would look forward to working closely with the Joint Staff, with the combatant commands, and the military services.

We have a lot of work to do together. We recently reached the devastating milestone of over half a million lives lost to COVID-19. That is more Americans than were lost during World War II and in all wars since 1945 that America has been involved in, combined. I agree with Secretary Austin that the pandemic is our most immediate national security threat, and if confirmed, I stand ready to support the Department's many efforts to beat back COVID-19.

Beyond the crisis of the moment, the 2018 National Defense Strategy, for which this committee deserves a great deal of credit, aptly recognized the reality of accelerating great power competition, particularly with China. Successfully competing with China will requires us to lean into our inherent strengths. That means building back better at home, spurring technological innovation, leading with our values, and reinvigorating our unrivaled network of alliances and partners.

If confirmed, I would work diligently to further the Department's efforts to strengthen deterrents and develop a joint force to effectively counter a more assertive China. The nuclear triad has been the bedrock of our strategic deterrent for decades. In the face of challenges from China, Russia, North Korea, and other states, we must ensure that our nuclear deterrent remains safe, reliable, and effective, one that is credible, not only in the eyes of our adversaries but in the eyes of our allies.

Climate change represents another existential danger, and if confirmed, I will champion a comprehensive approach to addressing the national security implications of the climate crisis.

We must also tackle growing threats in the cyber realm. The SolarWinds intrusion is just the latest example of vulnerabilities



that have become even more acute as the pandemic has forced entire communities and institutions online. The Department should adopt a layered approach to respond to cyberattacks, defend our networks and improve their resilience, and work alongside like-minded nations to constrain malign behavior.

Finally, I recognize that our country and the Department faces a moment of reckoning. If confirmed, would do all that I can to support efforts to address the scourge of sexual assault and end racism and violent extremism within the ranks. You have my commitment to help break down systemic barriers and foster a diverse and inclusive Department.

If confirmed, I would look forward to working with members of this committee on all of these issues. I am personally grateful for your long bipartisan commitment to our national defense, thoughtful oversight of our military, and your devotion to those who serve our country in uniform and their families. If confirmed, I would seek to forge a collaborative working relationship with Congress, and I would look forward to engaging with this committee regularly to advance our shared national security objectives.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Colin Kahl follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT BY DR. COLIN KAHL

Good morning Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today.

I would like to thank President Biden for my nomination. I would also like to thank Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks for their confidence, and of course, to Michèle Flournoy for her kind introduction.

Michèle has been a mentor to me and so many others over the course of her distinguished career and I am grateful for her years of friendship. As Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, she set a high bar for policy acumen, skillful management, unshakeable integrity, and principled, nonpartisan leadership. If confirmed, I aim to emulate her example.

I would also like to thank my wife Rebecca and my two amazing children, Nora and Rylan, for their love, support, and patience through this process. I wish they could be here today in person, but I know they cheering me on back home in California.

I was born and raised in OSD Policy, and could not be more humbled by the prospect of leading this great organization. I began my government career as an action officer in the Pentagon 16 years ago, during the Bush administration, and I returned to serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East during the first term of the Obama administration.

While the challenges we face as a nation have changed over the years, the role of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy—to provide forward-thinking and insightful advice to the Secretary on all matters related to foreign policy and national security—remains just as critical to the defense of the Nation as it ever has been.

Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks have pledged to empower the Policy team, and if confirmed, I pledge to be a strong, constructive civilian voice in the Department. I have the utmost respect for our military professionals at all levels, and if confirmed, I would look forward to working closely with the Joint Staff, combatant commands, and the Services.

We recently reached the devastating milestone of over half a million lives lost to COVID-19—more Americans than were lost during World War II or in all wars since 1945 combined. I agree with Secretary Austin that the pandemic is our most immediate national security threat, and, again, if confirmed, I stand ready to support the Department's many efforts to beat the pandemic.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy—for which this Committee deserves a great deal of credit—aptly recognized the reality of great power competition, particularly with China. If confirmed, I would work diligently to further the Department's efforts

to strengthen deterrence and develop a Joint Force to effectively counter the challenge posed by a more assertive China.

Successfully competing with China will require us to lean into our inherent national strengths by building back better at home, leading with our values abroad, and reinvigorating our unrivaled network of alliances and partners.

It is also critical that we ensure our nuclear deterrent is safe, reliable, and effective—one that is credible in the eyes of our adversaries and our allies. The nuclear triad has been the bedrock of our strategic deterrent for decades, and modernization efforts are key to maintaining our deterrent. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the triad remains an important hedge against the prospect of future technological changes that may question the survivability of any given leg.

Climate change represents another existential challenge—one that will increasingly shape the operational environment and contingencies the Department of Defense will face in the coming years. Energy resilience will be a major issue in any scenario for great power conflict, and the Department must take steps to make our infrastructure and facilities less vulnerable to extreme weather. If confirmed, I will champion a comprehensive approach to addressing the national security implications of climate change.

I view the SolarWinds intrusion as the latest example of a cyber-vulnerability that has become even more acute as the pandemic has forced entire communities and institutions online. True cybersecurity requires a whole-of-government effort, working in partnership with the private sector. The Department should adopt a layered approach to respond to cyberattacks, defend our networks and improve their resilience, and work alongside our allies to shape rules of the road that constrain malign behavior. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with members of this Committee on these issues.

In all of these areas, I believe our allies and partners must be seamlessly integrated into our efforts. If confirmed, I would dedicate myself to energizing our bilateral and multilateral defense relationships. I also recognize that American is strongest when we are leading with diplomacy, and if confirmed, I would closely coordinate with my colleagues at the State Department to support their diplomatic engagements around the world.

Finally, I recognize that our nation, and the Department, faces a moment of reckoning. If confirmed, I would do all that I can to support efforts to address the scourge of sexual assault and end violent extremism and systemic racism within the ranks. You have my commitment to help break down systemic barriers and foster a diverse and inclusive Department.

I am personally grateful for your long, bipartisan commitment to our national defense, thoughtful oversight of our military, and devotion to those who serve our country in uniform and their families. If confirmed, I would seek to forge a collaborative working relationship with Congress, and I would look forward to engaging with this Committee regularly to advance our shared national security objectives.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Dr. Kahl. With some Senators attending remotely I want to remind everyone of how things will run. Since it is impossible to know exactly when our colleagues who will be joining via the computer arrive, we will not be following our standard early bird timing rule. Instead, we handle the order of questions by seniority, alternating sides, until we have gone through everyone. Once we reach the end, if there is anyone we missed we will start back at the top of the list and continue until everyone has had their turn.

We will do the standard five-minute rounds. I ask my colleagues on the computers, and at their desk, to please keep an eye on the clock, which you should see on your screens if you on the computer and the lights before you. I think I have complete concurrence by the ranking member with this, so I will reiterate that please.

Finally, to allow for everyone to be heard, whether in the room or on the computer, I ask all colleagues to please mute your microphone when not speaking. Thank you very much.

Dr. Kahl, all of us have recognized, and you particularly in your pre-hearing policy questions, China is the top priority and pacing

threat, as you described it, and indeed Secretary Austin also called it a pacing threat. In that regard, what would be your assessment of our current posture in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly the forces and capabilities that are west of the International Date Line, and how does it align with the emerging threat?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Chairman. There is no question that China is the pacing threat, in most areas for the Department. The reason for that is clear. China is the only country in the world that can challenge the United States systematically, that is, in the economic domain, the technological domain, the military domain, and frankly, in shaping international order more broadly.

From the Department of Defense perspective, we have to get our posture in the Indo-Pacific right. I know, obviously, the administration is in the beginning days of a global posture review, and if I am confirmed I look forward to participating in that.

But my general sense, and I would commend the committee on its support for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative in this regard, I think our posture has to be distributed, it has to be ready and lethal, and it has to be resilient so that we can counter the most likely scenarios for potential conflict with China, and make it clear to Beijing that they cannot win a potential conflict with the United States or our allies.

Chairman REED. Since we are all committed, I believe, to a whole-of-government approach to problems, what non-military aspects of a strategy do you believe need additional attention? That will be one of your responsibilities in the Department, to coordinate with State and other agencies, so do you have a sense of what other factors that we can contribute to our approach?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. I mean, clearly the Department of Defense will have the lead in areas of competition, especially where deterrence and national defense are essential. But really, the Department is a supporting actor to kind of a symphony of activities that other agencies are involved.

You know, China and Russia, a lot of their activities fall below the threshold of traditional warfare. You mentioned yourself, in your opening remarks, about Russia's hybrid warfare. We also see gray zone activities the Chinese have engaged in.

But, you know, across the board energy coercion, weaponized corruption, disinformation, cyberattacks, many of these will require acts of diplomacy by the State Department, a reinvigorated development policy to check back against China's influence in the Belt and Road Initiative, for example, a global public health policy that really rolls back the pandemic and demonstrates American leadership, and a government-wide technological policy that keeps us on the cutting edge and protects our cyber networks, *et cetera*.

So if I am confirmed, a big role of the Under Secretary is to work alongside the interagency. I think I have good, trusting relationships with Secretary Blinken, with Wendy Sherman, if she is confirmed, with many at the White House such as Jake Sullivan and obviously the President. So I think I could work well with our interagency partners.

Chairman REED. Thank you. Turning now to Iran, President Biden has made clear his position that Iran must be prevented from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon. But he has indicated if Iran

returns to strict compliance of the JCPOA [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action], the United States will join the agreement and begin to negotiate and extend the provisions, and strengthen the provisions of the JCPOA, while also addressing other issues of concern, which is malign activities in Iran, which have been demonstrated frequently.

Indeed, just last week, President Biden ordered, as we all know, a strike just within the border of Syria on Iranian paramilitary groups in response to strikes against the United States facilities.

Do you believe it is possible to conduct this essentially two-track approach, getting back into the JCPOA while constraining the malign activities of the Iranians?

Dr. KAHL. I think it is, but it will be difficult. I think that it is absolutely essential that we prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon. It is also absolutely essential that we prioritize the protection of our forces in the Middle East and elsewhere, that are threatened by Iran and its proxies.

So even as we pursue diplomacy to put Iran's nuclear program back in the box, we have to remain vigilant against the other threats that Iran poses, and if diplomacy makes any progress on the nuclear front I would hope that that would be a platform for us to address the other issues along the lines that you suggested.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Dr. Kahl. Let me now recognize Senator Inhofe.

Senator INHOFE. Well, Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I have three questions. Before I come forth with my questions let me make a comment about my rather harsh introductory remarks.

I had two problems. One was that when we had our conversation I thought it was confidential. I did not know there were other people on the line. The second thing is, the report—a conversation like that should not go directly to the media, and I do not know why it did, and you do not need to respond to why it did.

But in spite of what you might have heard from me, I have one frailty, which I have lived with for a long time, and that is in spite of what you think, I love everybody.

Now here are my three questions, and I structured these, Dr. Kahl, to be yes-or-no questions, so it should be easy and I ought be able to get all of them in, so you can start the clock here.

Dr. Kahl, you said that—well, under Soleimani's leadership the Quds Force was responsible for the murder of hundreds of American men and women in uniform. Soleimani also armed, trained, and directed funds to terrorist groups across the region, which deliberately killed many thousands of innocent people in addition to Americans.

Dr. Kahl, you said that Soleimani's killing in January 2020, would lead to war. This did not happen. How do you see it now? Is the world a better place without Soleimani? Yes or no.

Dr. KAHL. I did not shed a tear for the death of Qasem Soleimani, for all the reasons that you mentioned. Senator Inhofe, I was concerned about the escalatory dynamics—

Senator INHOFE. Is the world in a better position now without him?

Dr. KAHL. I think it probably is a better place without him.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you. You wrote that President Trump's decision to move the Embassy to Jerusalem risked a third Palestinian uprising, and that also, as I said in my opening statement, did not happen. In fact, the Arab-Israeli cooperation has never been better. Do you acknowledge that your previous assumption that stronger United States-Israeli relations would spark violence and harm relations with Arab states, were those statements a mistake? Do you agree with it now?

Dr. KAHL. I think dynamics in the Middle East have changed. I support the Abraham Accords and I would not move the Embassy back to Jerusalem, and that is the policy, move it away from Jerusalem, and that is President Biden's policy, which I support.

Senator INHOFE. Very good. Last Thursday, at Secretary of Defense Austin's recommendation, President Biden took lethal action against Iranian-backed groups that continue to target Americans, and I agreed with that action. Dr. Kahl, do you agree and support President Biden's actions against the Iranian-backed militias, and do you believe pressure must continue to be placed on groups who take their orders from Iranian leadership?

Dr. KAHL. I do.

Senator INHOFE. Good, and do you agree that so long as Iranian-backed groups continue to target Americans for murder, any easing of sanctions against Iran should be off the table?

Dr. KAHL. I believe that we need to get the nuclear program in a box, because as troubling as Iran's behavior is, and it is very troubling, it would be exponentially more dangerous if Iran acquired a nuclear weapon. So there maybe context in which nuclear-related sanctions are part of a compliance-for-compliance framework, but we should not be loosening sanctions on terrorism or human rights or anything else that checks back Iran's destabilizing activities.

Senator INHOFE. If they continue to target Americans for murder, would easing the sanctions against Iraq, do you think they should be off the table?

Dr. KAHL. Iran was engaged in those activities before the Iran deal, during the Iran deal, and since we have reimpose sanctions after leaving the Iran deal. I think we need to check back Iran through a whole host of steps, some of which include sanctions, but there are many other things we need to be doing alongside our allies in the region, to counterbalance Iran.

Senator INHOFE. Okay. I am going to ask you one more time, and we are talking about in the event that they continue doing what they have been doing. Shouldn't easing sanctions be off the table? Yes or no.

Dr. KAHL. We should not ease sanctions on terrorism or their other activities, and we should not ease any sanctions on the nuclear front until Iran is in complete compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Let me recognize Senator Shaheen, please.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Dr. Kahl for being here and for your willingness to consider being nominated to this critical post at this time.

I appreciated the phone conversation we had yesterday, and I just want to ask you to reiterate two of the issues that we discussed and what I understood you to say to me. I was very pleased to hear you say that on the Havana Syndrome, which has affected so many of our public servants who were affected in Cuba and China and other parts of the world that you would do everything possible to ensure that we get to the bottom of who is responsible for those attacks and that we cooperate with other agencies to try and ensure we have answers and that people who are affected are taken care of.

Did I understand that correctly?

Dr. KAHL. You did, Senator. I think there is no higher obligation than making sure we are protecting our people who serve overseas. That means not just our men and women in uniform but our diplomats and other civilians. I know this is an issue that you have championed, and I would be happy to work with you on this issue, if I am confirmed.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. The other issue that we talked about, and you said you thought it was very important, was the continued implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Act, to ensure that we are including women in all of our actions through the Department of Defense. Again, you committed that that is a very important step and the Department should continue work in that area. Did I understand that correctly?

Dr. KAHL. You did. The empirical evidence is clear that the inclusion of women and girls in society and women in negotiations contributes to peaceful outcomes. I understand the Department has a Women, Peace, and Security strategic framework and implementation plan, and if I was confirmed I would look forward to pushing that forward and working with you on it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you very much. One of the things that you mentioned in your opening statement was the effectiveness of Russia's hybrid warfare, and we are looking at how we respond and hold Russia accountable for what they have been doing, whether it is the SolarWinds hack or efforts to harass our troops in parts of Europe, I certainly support the sanctions that the administration announced last week, but one of the best ways I think we could hold Russia accountable is to stop the completion of Nord Stream 2, and to take every action possible. I realize that some of those actions need to be taken with the Department of State, but can you talk about why it would be important for us to shut down Nord Stream 2 and what the impact on Russia would be?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, Senator. I share your view that Nord Stream 2 is extraordinarily troubling. I think it would create a type of energy dependence on Russia that would give Russia coercive influence over some of our closest allies. When I was in the Obama administration, traveling around Europe with then Vice President Biden, we repeatedly made the case against Nord Stream 2. I am obviously not privy to the ongoing deliberations in the administration on this issue, but, if confirmed, this is an issue I would continue to push on.

Senator SHAHEEN. Great. I hope you will do it with some urgency, as we need to act quickly if we are going to shut down the final leg of that pipeline.

Finally, on Syria, there have been calls—well, the previous administration withdrew our troops from Syria in a way that I thought was particularly detrimental, not just to what was happening in Syria but to the impact on our allies, the Kurds in that battle, our allies around the world, because of what it said about the ability to trust the United States.

But right now I think one of the biggest challenges we have in the world is in Syria. I have been disappointed that we do not yet have an envoy to Syria appointed by the administration. But can you talk about what you think our strategy towards Syria should be and how we develop a comprehensive approach to dealing with it? Because I would argue that neither the Obama administration nor the Trump administration had a real strategy on Syria.

Dr. KAHL. Yeah. Neither of the administrations cracked the code on Syria. That is for sure. I think, you know, our number one national security priority in Syria remains the sustained defeat of ISIS. The caliphate is down but ISIS is not completely out, and so we have to be laser-focused on that.

But I do think we have some leverage, and if we reengage in diplomacy, you know, we are working with partners that control about a third of the country. That is real leverage. We can work with the international community to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, not us directly, from the American taxpayer, but the globe. That is real leverage, and simply being back at the diplomatic table means that our voices, not just the voices in Moscow and Tehran and Ankara, will also be heard.

So there is no easy answer here. If there was, this problem would have been solved a long time ago. But we need to keep after it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Shaheen. Senator Cotton, please.

Senator COTTON. Dr. Kahl, let's review some of your recent foreign policy judgments. In 2017, when the United States recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, you wrote that the decision helps Iran and further isolated the United States in the Middle East. Since then, the United States has brokered landmark Mideast peace deals.

In 2019, when the State Department issued new guidance about Israeli settlements, you wrote that the move would be dangerous and destabilizing to the Middle East. But no such destabilization happened. Indeed, those peace deals happened.

In 2018, when President Trump warned Iran against restarting its nuclear program, you wrote that war drums are already sounding, but no war happened.

Also in 2018, when the Trump administration left the Iran nuclear deal, you said war will be all that is left, but no war occurred.

In 2019, when the Lincoln Strike Group was deployed to the Persian Gulf you wrote there is growing evidence we are on the path toward war, whether Trump realizes it or not. But again, no war came.

Last year, when the United States killed Iran's terrorist mastermind, Qasem Soleimani, you claimed now Trump has started a war with Iran and Iraq. But once again, no war followed.

By contrast, in 2010, as coalition forces withdrew from Iraq, you dismissed concerns about the security situation as exaggerated, and said it was very unlikely to trigger a dramatic uptick in violence.

So, Dr. Kahl, while you spent the last four years warning about impending wars that never happened, when Mideast policy was your job at the Pentagon, you failed to perceive the rise of ISIS, which launched an actual war involving 30,000 Islamic insurgents, conquering a quarter of Iraq.

Dr. Kahl, it seems to me that your judgments about matters of war and peace are almost always wrong.

Now let's turn to some of your other writings. Could I have the first poster board, please?

In 2019, in response to a story about Syria, you wrote that the Republican Party has debased itself at the altar of Trump, and now it is the party of ethnic cleansing.

Next poster board, please.

You further accused all Republican Senators who supported foreign military aid to our partners as owning the world's worst humanitarian crisis in Yemen. That is 45 Senators, all somehow responsible for mass civilian casualties, inflicted, in no small part, by Iran's proxies, I would add.

Could I have the next board, please?

Just last summer, you approvingly quoted a wild-eyed claim that the Republican Party has a death-cult fealty to President Trump.

Dr. Kahl, this is not about mean tweets or insulting Senators. We are all used to harsh criticism up here. But this is just a small, a very small sample of the many intemperate and unbalanced remarks that you have directed at people who disagree with you about public policy. But the job you seek demands a judicious, even-tempered demeanor. You will face disagreements every day, in the Pentagon, across the Executive branch, with Congress, but your long record of volatile outbursts will have a toxic and detrimental impact on your relationship with Congress.

What is worse, I fear your intemperate manner will create an equally toxic environment inside the Pentagon, stifling healthy, robust debate. There is the fact that your rants have slandered not just a few politicians up here in Congress but the millions of troops and veterans who consider themselves Republicans.

So, Dr. Kahl, how you can responsibly execute the duties of this position having so deeply poisoned the well?

Dr. KAHL. I appreciate your candor, Senator. To state the obvious, the last few years have been pretty polarizing on social media. I am sure there are times that I got swept up in that. There were a number of positions that President Trump took that I strongly opposed. I think the language that I used in opposing those was sometimes disrespectful, and for that I apologize.

I understand that the position of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, while it is a political appointment, is not a political job. It is a policy job, one that requires me to be nonpartisan in the halls of the Pentagon and bipartisan working with this committee and others in Congress, and I know that I can comport myself in that way, because I did it the last time I was at the Pentagon, working for Secretary Gates. I did it when I was at the Pentagon



the first time, in the Bush administration. I have a long track record of being able to put politics aside in public office and put the national interests first.

Senator COTTON. Thank you, Dr. Kahl. I am glad that you recognized that you were swept away in the moment. I would just say that some of these tweets happened in the middle of the night, when presumably you were sitting at home reading the news. The real tense moments are going to happen when you are in the Pentagon and Iran hijacks another American ship, or China shoots down an aircraft. If this is the way you respond to mere policy disagreements when you are sitting at home reading the news, I do not think that you are fit to sit in the Pentagon and make decisions about life and death. That is one reason why I will oppose your nomination.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Cotton. Now let me recognize Senator Gillibrand via WebEx.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, Israel remains one of closest allies in the Middle East. What is your view on the importance of the United States-Israel relationship, and if confirmed, what policies will you develop to maintain the ties between the military and civil societies with the United States and Israel?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I think that the United States-Israel security relationship must remain iron-clad, and it serves the vital national interests of both countries. When I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East from 2009 to 2011, I traveled to Israel 13 times in 3 years. I had more than 100 meetings with senior Israeli Ministry of Defense and Israeli defense forces officials. I think that my colleagues in Israel would speak highly of those encounters.

As Michèle Flournoy noted, in the summer of 2009 I was the Pentagon official that shook loose the Iron Dome proposal, which had been languishing for years, and got the ball rolling so that we, working with Congress, could get that money to support that vital defense system.

When I was at the White House, I supported the 10-year, \$38 billion memorandum of understanding with Israel so that we could continue to enhance our security relationship.

If I am confirmed, Senator, I will do what I did before, which is to make sure that we are working as closely as possible with our Israeli allies, because we have so many interests in common.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Recent and ongoing regional aggression by Iran and the Middle East continue to keep concerns raised regarding Israel. What are your thoughts on supporting continued United States funding for those programs such as our missile defense program, Iron Dome, David's Sling and Arrow, and what steps should the Department be taking to address Iran's regional aggression? What policy developments would you suggest in response to recent rocket attacks on United States and coalition forces in Iraq?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses, not just to our forces in the region but to our allies and partners in the region, Israel first and foremost. Israel obviously faces direct threats to its territory from Iranian-backed groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and from the infrastructure that

Iran has been building in Syria. I think both the United States and Israel have the right to defend themselves. I am supportive of the strikes that Israel has taken to defend itself in places like Syria. I also support our efforts to defend our forces when they are attacked or threatened by Iranian proxies.

I also think that the United States-Israel defense relationship has so many benefits because Israel remains at the cutting edge in developing things like Iron Dome and David's Sling and the arrow system in missile defense, and that there is a two-way street that our defense and technological cooperation with Israel not only benefits Israel's security but benefits our security. So, if confirmed, I would look forward to continue advancing that relationship.

Senator GILLIBRAND. With regard to cybersecurity issue, I am sure you are aware of the SolarWinds intrusion, and that infiltration affected many parts of the United States Government, including the Pentagon, without anyone's knowledge for months, putting the military, the government, and private companies at incalculable risks.

What policy advice will you be putting forward within the DOD to help stop future intrusions? What DOD cyber policies towards Russia will you put forward? It is our understanding that China piggybacked on the SolarWinds intrusion to infiltrate the same systems and steal information. What DOD policies will you put forward towards Russia and China, to prevent and avert such cyber intrusions in the future?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, Senator. Of course, I am not privy to the classified information on SolarWinds. I am aware of the open source information on it. My understanding is that DOD unclassified systems, some of them were exposed but none were compromised. But obviously the extent of the SolarWinds intrusion is deeply troubling, and I think it is a reminder of just how large the attack surface for cyberattacks is. I fear that that attack surface has grown substantially over the last year, as so many of our activities have moved online as a consequence of the pandemic. So this is an issue of foremost importance, not just for the Department but across the U.S. Government.

I tend to align myself with the views of the Cyber Solarium Commission report, and I know a number of members on this committee have been quite involved in that, in the sense that there is no silver bullet on the cyber threat. We need a mix of deterrents by punishment, that is, the ability to retaliate in cyberspace and other domains against those who attack us. We have to be able to defend our networks.

Almost as important, we have to be able to quickly rebuild our networks so that that resilience itself is a deterrent against actors who think they gain by taking those networks down. We have to work with allies and like-minded states on norms and rules of the road around cyberspace so that malign actors pay real costs internationally, multilaterally, when they engage in harmful activities.

So, if confirmed, I would look forward to advancing DOD efforts in all these areas and working with the interagency on a whole-of-government approach.

Senator GILLIBRAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and just for the record I am going to submit a question, since my time has expired,

about the cyber workforce and what role you can play to ensuring that we recruit the highest standard of cyber personnel for DOD.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Gillibrand. Let me recognize Senator Fischer.

Senator FISCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Dr. Kahl. Dr. Kahl, as you are well aware, the administration is considering resuming negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, and while the Department of State would lead those efforts the Department of Defense must take into account the impact that these negotiations, and any agreement, would have on the military balance in the Middle East.

In your answer to the chairman on the discussion on the Iran situation you said it is essential prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. If that is true, why, in 2015, did the Iran deal repeal restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program in a series of ways? First, the U.N. Security Council resolution endorsing the JCPOA repealed previous U.N. Security Council resolutions prohibiting Iran from ballistic missile testing. Then, within the JCPOA itself, restrictions on selling Iran missile technology disappeared after eight years.

Do you have a response to that?

Dr. KAHL. I do. Senator, I share your view. Iran should never be allowed to get a nuclear weapon. When I worked at the Pentagon as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense I spent countless hours overseeing our military contingency planning to hold Iran's nuclear facilities at risk in the event that they move towards a nuclear weapon. I also was instrumental in helping move additional forces into the theater so that when President Obama said all options are on the table, the table was actually set. So I am clear-eyed about this challenge.

I do believe, based on my experience, that the most enduring solution is a diplomatic one, and I support the Biden administration's compliance-for-compliance approach, which is that if Iran moves in full compliance with its obligations that the United States would reenter the agreement, but as a first step towards a stronger and longer agreement in addressing the ballistic missile issue and other destabilizing activities that Iran is engaged in, because it is very important.

Senator FISCHER. We all know that ballistic missiles deliver nuclear warheads. Earlier you said that the nuclear program for Iran should be in a box. Are you going to push and insist that ballistic missiles research and the ability for Iran to obtain ballistic missiles, that is going to be off the table in the future in any discussion with Iran?

Dr. KAHL. No, I do not think so, Senator. I think the goal would be to, on a compliance—

Senator FISCHER. Aren't you contradicting yourself when you say a nuclear program should be in a box for Iran, but yet you are going to allow them to obtain a delivery system? A ballistic missile is a delivery system of a nuclear warhead.

Dr. KAHL. Sorry, Senator. I think you were misunderstanding me. I am not supporting Iran's ballistic missile program. I am saying that putting Iran's program in a box, in a compliance-for-com-

pliance framework, is a vehicle to address Iran's ballistic missile program, and I think we should do that.

Senator FISCHER. You know, many of us were surprised when the sunsets for these restrictions were included in the deal. A week before the deal was struck, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff, General Dempsey, testified before this committee that, quote, "Under no circumstances should we relieve pressure on Iran relative to ballistic missile capabilities and arms trafficking," end quote. So you agree with General Dempsey's view?

Dr. KAHL. I do not believe we should lift sanctions on Iran's ballistic missile program. I think we should try to get their ballistic missile capabilities reduced through diplomacy, and, if confirmed, I will work with the interagency to make sure we have a clear-eyed approach which addresses this issue.

Senator FISCHER. In your answers to this committee's advance policy questions regarding a no-first-use policy you stated, "I believe the United States should periodically examine its nuclear declaratory policy to ensure it is suitable for the current and foreseeable security environment and supports U.S. strategic objectives. Our declaratory policy should support our strategic deterrents and be credible in the eyes of both adversaries and allies. As such, I would expect to consult closely with allies in the course of reexamining our nuclear policy."

You know, I do not disagree with on any of that, but it does not help us understand what your views are. At this moment, is it your personal view that we should adopt a no-first-use policy?

Dr. KAHL. It is not.

Senator FISCHER. That surprises me, because it has been the consistent advice that we have received as members of this committee, from senior military leadership, that we not adopt such a policy. Three members of President Obama's Cabinet—Secretary Carter, Secretary Kerry, and Secretary Moniz, also reportedly opposed adopting a no-first-use policy. That was in 2016. More recently, an independent assessment performed by the Institute for Defense Analysis concluded that, quote, "The U.S. adoption of a no-first-use policy will not bring about a setting that is more conducive to positive behavior by adversaries or to strengthen relations with allies. In light of already constrained U.S. policy and procedure governing nuclear use, the weight of the evidence indicates significant potential for no-first-use to impart more harm than good," end quote.

Dr. KAHL. Senator, just to clarify, we are in agreement. I said I am not personally in support of a no-first-use policy.

Senator FISCHER. Oh. I am glad you clarified that, sir. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Fischer. Let me recognize Senator Blumenthal.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your public service, Dr. Kahl, and thanks for the conversation we had yesterday. I would like to pursue a couple of the topics that we covered.

Would you agree with me that climate change is a national security threat?

Dr. KAHL. It is.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Would you also agree that we need a new vision and new policies to address this threat, around the world as well as within the Pentagon?

Dr. KAHL. We do, and if you will give me a moment to expound on that as it relates to the Pentagon. Climate change is going to change everything. It will change the operational environment for the military in strategically vital areas like the Arctic. It will create new contingencies for humanitarian emergencies and violent conflict that the Department may be called upon to respond to. Extreme weather is already costing billions of dollars here at home, to our DOD infrastructure, and that will increase in the years ahead, at home and abroad. Of course, there are real questions about energy resilience, especially in the context of great power competition.

So for all those reasons I think climate has to be integrated into our defense strategy.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Better than it is now, and I look forward to pursuing all of those areas with you in greater detail, because I think it is so vitally important, never has been more important, so thank you.

Would you agree with me that white supremacy and far right extremism, lack of sufficient inclusiveness all our continuing threats to our national security and readiness?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, I think the recent statements by the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] made clear that the various threads of domestic terrorism, which are often aligned with those view, are a growing threat to the country.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Would you also agree that military sexual assault needs to be combatted more vigorously and thoroughly within the military?

Dr. KAHL. There is no question. All the trend lines on this issue are in the wrong direction. I know that the Department has tried to address this issue in the past, but whatever it has done clearly has not worked, and so I stand firmly behind Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks. I know they have a new commission looking at this. I know this is an issue that the committee is passionate about, and for good reason because it is a scourge. If confirmed, I would look forward to working with you and with others on this committee as we try to get a good answer to this terrible problem.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. These two topics are very much of concern to many of us on this committee, and I welcome your willingness to work with us on it.

I would like to pursue some of our arms sales policies and focus first on Saudi Arabia. You and I discussed this issue yesterday. My own view is that we need to reset our relationship with Saudi Arabia and recalibrate our sales, in fact, cut significantly some of our arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Can you suggest specifics in that regard, and maybe the threshold question is, do you agree that we ought to recalibrate and reset that relationship?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, very much. I support President Biden's effort to recalibrate the relationship to make sure that it is more fully aligned with our interests and with our values. A dimension of that, of course, is our arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other countries. My understanding is that the administration is in the midst

of a strategic review, of which this is a component, and so if I was confirmed, I would look forward to engaging in that review, and as I get more deeply briefed on the matter I would gladly come back and speak to you and others about it.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Do you think that we ought to be similarly reviewing, with close scrutiny, our arms sales to other countries, some of them having autocratic regimes and some similarly anti-humanitarian policies?

Dr. KAHL. I do. I think our arms sales need to be aligned not just with our national interests but with our values.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Do you think that there is an urgency about this review?

Dr. KAHL. I hope there is. From everything I know from the outside there is, and you have my personal commitment that if I am confirmed I will treat the issue urgently, because it is important to me.

Senator BLUMENTHAL. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Blumenthal. Let me recognize Senator Rounds via WebEx.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, thank you for our recent call and the chance to get some of your views on defense policy and to discuss some of the criticisms that you have already received here today. You were very critical of a great number of the Trump administration's policies. I want to let you know that there is a lot of concern among the minority with some of the statements that have been attributed to you. Your tweets have been tough, and in many cases, incendiary, something for which many members had issues with the previous administration's nominee for this very same position.

I would like to focus on some other issues specifically with regard to policy, and I would like to begin—look, I believe that a credible, modernized nuclear triad is the better outcome on which the nation's defense rests. I believe that the ground-based strategic deterrent is critical to maintaining the triad.

Could you please tell the committee where you stand on the importance of maintaining the triad into the future, to provide a credible nuclear deterrent both for our own defense and for the defense of our allies? Also, if you are confirmed, do we have your commitment that you would support full funding for the GBSD [Ground Based Strategic Deterrent]? I just add that it is not real helpful for one to say that they will study the issue, as we have heard from some others. This is one of the main defense program issues that we face right now, and it would seem reasonable that you would have a position on it during a confirmation hearing.

Dr. KAHL. Well, thank you, Senator, and I too enjoyed our conversation. Look, there is nothing more important to our national survival than ensuring that we have a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. I think our modernization efforts are essential in that area, not only as it relates to the three legs of the triad but to nuclear command and control systems.

I agree with you that the triad has been a bedrock of deterrence and stability for many decades, and I think that the triad remains—my personal position is that the triad remains a critical

hedge against the possibility of technological modernization by our adversaries could call into question the survivability of any one leg of the triad.

So undoubtedly there will be areas that I am not currently privy to, because I do not have access to classified information, so I look forward to being more deeply briefed on those issues, but that is my position.

Senator ROUNDS. So I am just going to clarify this. Today your position is you fully support the triad, including the GBSD, and you would commit today that at this time you are in support of fully funding its modernization.

Dr. KAHL. My position is that all three legs of the triad need to remain viable. What that requires is something that will require me to dig into the details of the current modernization efforts. I have not been in the government in four years. My information is four years out of date. But I support modernization efforts to keep the triad viable.

Senator ROUNDS. You would see it as a triad and not only two of the three but all three.

Dr. KAHL. Correct.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. As you know, the budget topline for the Department of Defense is one of the major issues facing our committee. What is your position on it, and what do you base the position on?

Dr. KAHL. My personal position is that we should not start with a budget number in mind and work backwards to strategy. We should do it the other way around, and, if confirmed, one of my principal jobs, as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, would be to get the strategy right so that we can discern from that the policies and capabilities and investments that are required, and then the budget flows from that.

So you have my commitment that if I am confirmed that the budget recommendations I make will be matched to the strategy that we put forward.

Senator ROUNDS. The DOD cyber strategy, published in December of 2018, charges the DOD to defend forward, shape the day-to-day competition, and prepare for war. United States Cyber Command has demonstrated successful instances of defend forward, and doing it in securing the 2018 and the 2020 elections.

In your role as Under Secretary of Policy, if confirmed, you would oversee the development of cyber policy. What are your views on the defend forward, shape the day-to-day competition, and prepare for war concepts to deter and disrupt Russia and China in cyberspace?

Dr. KAHL. Senator, I support the defend-forward position and I agree with you that it generated very impressive results, at least as far as I can tell from open source information, in the 2018 and 2020 election cycles. I think it needs to be part of a layered approach, as I mentioned earlier, that also includes better defense of our networks, better resilience, and also more concerned diplomacy alongside our allies and partners to shape the rules of the road around cyber so that malign actors pay a heavier price for their activities.

Senator ROUNDS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rounds. Let me recognize Senator HIRONO via WebEx.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note that this nominee has been criticized regarding some tweets that he put out on the Iran deal, which I consider to be one of the most critical agreements that this country has entered into. That kind of criticism regarding tweets from folks who did not say anything about the kind of lying, racist tweets out of the former President I think is pretty rich.

I would like to say, regarding the Iran deal, it placed significant and verifiable constraints on Iran's ability to build nuclear weapons. That was the intent of the Iran deal, because Iran was maybe one or two months from having developed a nuclear weapon. So that was a very critical agreement that we got into, and former President Trump's reckless decision to unilaterally—unilaterally—withdraw from the Iran deal has made the world less safe. Instead of isolating Iran, the decision isolated the United States, and now Iran has begun ramping up uranium enrichment efforts, which is exactly what Dr. Kahl said would happen.

The criticism of Dr. Kahl's alleged tepid support of Israel is unfounded. In 2009, he worked to approve United States support for Israel's Iron Dome rocket defense system to protect itself from incoming attacks. So with regard to the Middle East, I think the criticisms of Dr. Kahl are very much misplaced.

I want to ask you, Dr. Kahl, the following two questions that I ask of every nominee who appears before any of the committees on which I sit.

The first question is, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

Dr. KAHL. No.

Senator HIRONO. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement related to this kind of conduct?

Dr. KAHL. No.

Senator HIRONO. Dr. Kahl, I applaud Secretary Austin's recent announcement that the Pentagon will prioritize climate change considerations in its activities, risk assessments, and the next National Defense Strategy, and also the recognition in your opening statement that climate change represents an existential challenge. I have to say that the Department of Defense is one of the few departments that has actually, through testimony of prior DOD Secretaries and going forward, to acknowledge that climate change poses a threat to the world, not just to our country. So it is an existential challenge.

If confirmed, how do you intend to mitigate the risk of climate change across the joint force?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I think that climate change is a top national security issue. You know, one of the jobs that I would have in front of me if I am confirmed is to revise the National Defense Strategy. I think as we do so we need to build on the 2018 strategy, which I think is an excellent document and I think especially we need to get the China challenge right.



But there are some things that were not in the 2018 document that we need to include, and climate change is one of them. So I would see a principal role of mine is to make sure that climate change is integrated into the National Defense Strategy, and then there will be policies and investments that flow from that. As I said to Senator Blumenthal, that means that the strategy has to account for the effect that climate change will have on DOD operations, on the contingencies the Department could be called upon to respond to, on DOD infrastructure, and also energy resilience. So I would make sure all those areas are covered.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you very much for that kind of commitment. I want to turn briefly to the Indo-Pacific AOR. In fiscal year 2021, NDAA included \$2.2 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, PDI, to bolster our alliances in the Indo-Pacific and counter increasingly malign Chinese activities in the region. The United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) commander, Admiral Davidson, just submitted a report asking for an additional \$4.7 billion in fiscal year 2022 for the PDI to continue momentum in this area.

I would ask that you continue to build on the PDI and engage with our allies in the region, especially the freely associated states, FAS, like Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. I hope you will continue that kind of engagement and support.

Dr. KAHL. Yes, Senator. I strongly commit to you and others on the committee for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. There is a lot of bipartisan support for supporting our allies and partners in the region, and you have my commitment to act in that regard, if I am confirmed.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. I look forward to working with you, especially in those areas.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Hirono. Let me introduce and recognize Senator Ernst.

Senator ERNST. Thank you, Mr. Chair, very much.

Dr. Kahl, I have a few questions for you today regarding some of your previous positions and statements that have caught my attention leading up to today's hearings, and you have heard from some of my colleagues that had similar concerns.

Dr. Kahl, you are nominated to an important position, and that position is Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. While everyone's world outlook and views on national security matter when it comes to the Department of Defense, your core beliefs and internal working philosophy are central to the position that you are seeking, and to be blunt, Dr. Kahl, your social media and other commentary over recent years—years, not just a handful of months but years—provides a concerning outlook to me. This is especially true when it comes to Iran.

In one tweet you pushed the idea that pushing for more inspections of Iran's nuclear sites is just an effort to destroy the Iran deal. You further pushed that the Trump administration's Iran strategy as efforts to, quote, "justify war," end quote, and to, quote, "bait Iran into restarting its nuclear program."

So, Mr. Kahl, do you stand by your assessment that the Trump administration was baiting Iran into restarting its nuclear program?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. My concern with the maximum pressure campaign was largely that it would have two consequences. One is that it would encourage Iran to re-accelerate its nuclear program, and two, that it would encourage Iran to try to generate counter-leverage by increasing their provocations in the region. Both of those things have happened in the last three years. Iran is a lot closer to the fissile material required for a nuclear weapon than they were at the end of the Obama administration, and we see more attacks against our forces in Iraq. We have seen attacks in the Strait of Hormuz. We have seen more drone attacks and missile attacks on Saudi Arabia.

So I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses, but it was not clear to me that the Trump administration's approach was having the effect that President Trump and Secretary Pompeo and others were hoping for.

Senator ERNST. I would counter, as well, that the JCPOA, I do not believe, stopped any further development of Iran as it made its way to nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Kahl, do you still stand by your assessment that the \$100 billion released to Iran for the Iranian deal was being used for domestic investment? I think at that time you had said that, quote, "Most of it will go to butter," end quote.

Dr. KAHL. So I am not privy to the classified assessments on this. All I know is that the DIA testified in 2017 that the majority of the sanctions relief from the JCPOA went to domestic purposes. You may be privy to information that contradicts that. I am not. I do know that unfortunately, as we have re-imposed sanctions as a part of the maximum pressure campaign, it has not had the effect of drying up Iranian resources for its support for its missile program, its conventional weaponry, its support for terrorism.

So I think we need to do both. I think we need to address the nuclear program and address these other destabilizing activities.

Senator ERNST. Well, \$100 billion is a lot for butter. Do you believe it to be plausible that some of that \$100 billion could have gone to Iran's proxy terrorist forces that perhaps targeted some of our allies as well as American forces?

Dr. KAHL. It is completely conceivable. I will say that, you know, the Trump administration, in 2018, I believe, released an estimate that between 2012 and 2018, Iran spent about \$2 to \$3 billion a year supporting its proxies around the Middle East. The sad reality is it is just not very expensive for them to do it, and so it is a huge problem for us, but one that unfortunately does not require a lot of resources for Iran to carry out.

Senator ERNST. Mm-hmm, which is true. That is very true that it is very unfortunate.

So, admittedly, you and I do come from starkly different places on Iran. I think the Obama policy on Iran was a naive approach and the Iran deal was a failed policy that made us more vulnerable, and in recent years I do think those concerns have been proven to be legitimate. For more than four decades, Iran and the terrorist organizations' funds have targeted American civilians and

military personnel as well as our partners and allies, and we know that they will continue to be a prominent state sponsor of terrorism, not just across the Middle East but cultivating different operating networks around our globe.

I know my time has expired. I will just make one final comment. We have mentioned the tweets. A number of my colleagues have. There is one that will demonstrate my thoughts today, where you tweeted that if Bolton replaces McMaster we are all going to die. I think that this demonstrates that these exaggerated views and incendiary remarks are not what we are looking for in someone that will serve advising policy within the Department of Defense.

I served in uniform in the Middle East. I have a daughter that is on track to serve in our great Army in just a little over a year, and I will not be supporting your nomination because I believe that my daughter, her colleagues, the other young men and women that are choosing to serve in our armed forces deserve someone that will take a serious outlook on policy and not put this kind of garbage out in front of the American public.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Ernst. Senator Kaine, please.

Senator Kaine. Dr. Kahl, thank you for being here today. I think your nomination is sort of a proxy for a sharp difference of opinion in this committee and in Congress about the wisdom of the JCPOA, and that is the core of many of the questions today. I believe the JCPOA, although not perfect, was dramatically better than the status quo ante. Democrats supported it. Republicans did not. But I believe it was dramatically better than the status quo ante, and it is not just me.

President Trump's Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, who clearly understood Republican legislative opposition to the JCPOA, advised him to stay in the deal. President Trump's Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, who clearly understood Republican legislative opposition to the JCPOA, advised him to stay in the deal. Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dunford, who clearly understood Republican opposition to the deal, told President Trump to stay in the deal. Instead, he backed out of the deal and he shifted the world's attention from Iran's behavior to America's good faith, would American good faith follow a diplomatic deal. So just some basic facts about the deal.

Didn't the first sentence in the first paragraph of the JCPOA say that Iran reaffirms that it will never purchase, develop, or acquire nuclear weapons?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, it does.

Senator Kaine. Did that have a sunset provision to it?

Dr. KAHL. No.

Senator Kaine. If Iran had ever sought to purchase, acquire, or develop a nuclear weapon that would have been a violation of the JCPOA. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Senator Kaine. That violation would have given the United States a legal rationale, if the United States decided it needed to take military action to stop Iran's nuclear program.

Dr. KAHL. Yes, and as I said, I spent my time at the Pentagon planning for exactly that contingency.

Senator KAINE. So the U.S. decision to back out of this deal actually takes that iron-clad commitment that the U.S. could have used as a legal rationale, should it have been necessary, and it now makes that commitment, that provision of questionable enforceability, doesn't it?

Dr. KAHL. I worry that it does, yeah.

Senator KAINE. The JCPOA gave the United States the complete agreement to impose any sanctions we deemed appropriate against Iran for human rights violations, bellicose activities in the region, ballistic missile programs. We had the complete freedom to impose sanctions on any non-nuclear activity under the deal, didn't we?

Dr. KAHL. We do.

Senator KAINE. The only sanctions relief in the JCPOA was sanctions relief that was specifically about Iran's nuclear program. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. Correct.

Senator KAINE. That sanction relief would only go to Iran if they followed the JCPOA. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. Correct.

Senator KAINE. There was an additional element—some of my colleagues have asked about sunsets—there was an additional element of the JCPOA that did not sunset, like the open commitment to never purchase, acquire, or develop nuclear weapons. The element that did not sunset was there was about 30 years of enhance inspection and other requirements that Iran had to follow, but at the end of year 30, those enhanced inspections, many of them, or restrictions on centrifuges, progressively expired. By year 30, Iran had pledged, henceforth, it would always follow all IAEA inspection protocols, including the additional protocol that was developed after North Korea cheated on IAEA inspections. That was permanent and never sunset. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. It was the most verifiable arms control or non-proliferation agreement ever negotiated.

Senator KAINE. Those inspections, including the additional protocol, gave the United States significant additional insight into the Iranian program so that if we ever believed they were violating the promise contained in the first sentence, and that then justified military action, we would have better intel to target the military action to achieve our objective. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. Our intelligence and military professionals consistently made that point.

Senator KAINE. We have had intel about Iran for a while but it has been murky, but what the JCPOA gave us was intel plus this enhanced inspection regime to determine their compliance but also, if necessary, tragically, to target military activity to make sure that they would never purchase, acquire, or develop nuclear weapons. Correct?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. If you do not know where something is, it is hard to target it.

Senator KAINE. I really believe that the controversy over your nomination is essentially a proxy war. Republicans did not like the Iran deal. They were really happy that President Trump pulled out

of it, over the objections of Secretary Mattis, Secretary Tillerson, head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dunford. I think the activities in the region have demonstrated that the pulling out of that deal has had very, very negative consequences, and we are living them today. It is a very different reality than it was in 2015.

But I would like to return to a position where we would have a clearly enforceable international agreement that Iran would never seek to purchase, acquire, or develop a nuclear weapon, and I cannot understand why an American President would have blown up such a deal.

Thank you, Dr. Kahl.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Kaine. Let me recognize Senator Tillis.

Senator TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Dr. Kahl, congratulations on your nomination being put forward. I had not thought about talking about the JCPOA, but I really do not think the discussion we are having here today relates to legitimate policy differences on JCPOA. I think it is a series of fact patterns and your communications that are reminiscent of a Trump nominee who ultimately withdrew because of concerns expressed by some of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle about temperament and positions that that person took before they were set forth as a nomination.

So, Dr. Kahl, I have been on this committee going into my seventh year. I have confirmed the vast majority of nominations that have come through, first in the Obama administration, Trump administration, and I hope we are going to get to the same place there. But you are going to be in a very important position, and I feel like that this committee really has a history of working on a bipartisan basis. That is why we are successful with an NDAA every year that I have been here, and I have some concerns that your nomination may not put us in that same posture of working with you.

I have a couple of questions, and I hope you have time to go a couple of policy questions. But you appear to have a history of making what some believe are bad-faith arguments against those with whom you disagree. Why should we believe, if you are confirmed, that you are going to listen to members with opposing viewpoints, including members of this committee and Members of Congress? Why should we believe that we can have that working relationship and have an honest disagreement and a productive relationship?

Dr. KAHL. So I appreciate that question. I think you can have confidence because the last time I was a senior defense official that is how I comported myself. Keep in mind I worked for two Republican Secretaries of Defense. I do not think you will find anybody I worked with, either in the Bush administration or in the Obama administration, when I worked for Secretary Gates, who would accuse me of being partisan in the halls of the Pentagon. I think I had good relationships with the House and Senate committees when I was in office.

So I believe strongly in public service and I believe that the job that I am being considered for is a non-political job. It is a policy job, and I am committed to moving forward on that basis.

Senator TILLIS. In some of your tweets, I know that Senator Cotton and others have covered the landscape, but the one that caught my attention was some of the tweets related to conspiracy theories involving President Trump and Russia. I think in your words you communicated the “Kushner Kremlin quid pro quo and collusion on the DNC hack.” The Mueller investigation did not find anything to substantiate that.

So, in retrospect, do you feel like you may have misled some of your followers in context to these uncorroborated allegations?

Dr. KAHL. So I think the tweets that you reference were in response to media reports at the time. I mean, as you know, Senator, the overwhelming consensus of our intelligence community was that Russia interfered in the 2016 election. The Mueller report, which you made reference to, as well as the bipartisan Senate Intelligence report found that members of the Trump campaign were aware of Russian activities, encouraged them, and were eager to benefit from them.

I think people of good faith can disagree as to whether to describe that as collusion or not. That is fair. But I hope we would all agree that it was not a right.

Senator TILLIS. Let’s talk about something else. At the time that Soleimani was talking out I think you were critical of that decision. Do you still stand by your position that you think taking out one of the worst terrorists and murderers of American soldiers in the Middle East was a bad idea, and why?

Dr. KAHL. I have no moral qualms with the strike against Qasem Soleimani. He had the blood of hundreds of Americans on his hands, and thousands of people across the region. You know, I traveled to Iraq 16 times during the thick of the war. I have been on the other side of rocket fire. Some of those were probably made in Iran, and so I had no problem with that.

My chief concern at the time, as I am sure you are aware, was with the escalatory dimensions, which is why, of course, the Bush administration had also not taken a shot. It was not just the Obama administration. We came very close. As you know, the Iranians retaliated for the strike with a missile salvo against Al Asad Air Base in western Iraq. Fortunately, no servicemembers were killed but dozens suffered brain injuries, and so we came very close to a major shooting war with Iran, and that was my concern.

Senator TILLIS. I apologize that I did not get to some policy questions. I will probably submit a couple for the record. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Tillis. Let me now recognize Senator King.

Senator KING. First, with regard to your tweets, my mother, when I first started dating in high school, gave a piece of advice that may have helped you. She said, “Never put it in writing.”

[Laughter.]

Dr. KAHL. It is a good point.

Senator KING. I want to ask a question that we could take an hour or two hours or several days discussing, and I would like you to try to give me an answer in about a minute and half. What does China want? As we try to develop policy with regard to China, I think it is important to understand and appreciate what it is they

are seeking, what are their goals. I asked Henry Kissinger that question and he gave me a very thorough answer. Give me a minute of thought of what you think the goals of China are which should inform our foreign and military policy.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I would think about it in the following ways. I mean, obviously, China, under Xi Jinping, first and foremost is trying to promote domestic stability and regime survival at home. But I think as China's interests around the world have become more expansive they want to make the world safe for the CCP, and that means shaping the international order in a way that is not just compatible with China's interests but with the values of the communist party. That makes China a much more revisionist actor, and one, frankly, at odds with our value system, and our interests, in many respects.

I also think the Xi Jinping envisions China becoming the world's preeminent power. I know that the DOD China Power Report notes China's ambition to be the world's greatest military power by midcentury. So I think for a long time China was biding its time, but in the Xi Jinping era has really tried to come out on its on in ways that are much more assertive and threatening to our interests.

Senator KING. Thank you. You mentioned earlier cyber and you mentioned the Solarium Commission. I appreciate that. Many of us did a lot of work in that area. One of the points of emphasis in our report was the importance of deterrence, the importance of imposing costs on our adversaries, on those who would intrude in terms of cyber in our country, and also the importance of allies.

Talk to me about deterrence and allies and how those two interact.

Dr. KAHL. Yes, sir. Thank you for your work on the Cyber Solarium Commission. I know a lot of its recommendations have already been put forward in legislation and I imagine more to follow.

I think we can think of deterrence in two ways. There is deterrence by punishment, that is, if an adversary takes an act against you, they will know that you will strike back in a way that will hurt, so that they will think twice about doing it to begin with. So we have to have the cyber equivalent of that. That includes action in cyberspace but also elsewhere, sanctions, diplomatic isolation, things like that.

But deterrence can also be deterrence by denial, that is, adjusting the cost benefit calculation of the adversary so that they just do not think it is worth it. That is a mix, I think, of a combination of defense of our networks and resilience of those networks, because, frankly, some attacks are always going to get through and so you need to be able to reconstitute your systems quickly, especially in the military domain where seconds matter.

Senator KING. Let me move to the allies piece. My sense is that sanctions are much more effective if they are multilateral rather than unilateral, number one, and number two, there is some utility in trying to develop an international set of norms and expectations and guardrails around cyber in order to indicate what the rules of the road are. We want an adversary who uses cyber as a means of national power to understand that they can become a pariah nation.

Dr. KAHL. I 100 percent agree on both scores, that multilateralism gives us more leverage, more power when it comes to sanctions, but also in shaping the normative rules of the road, that can signal to malign actors they will pay an international price for their behavior.

Final question, in a few seconds left, climate change is often discussed in terms of domestic politics and environmentalism and protecting the planet. I view it as a serious national security threat, in terms of effect on our operations. But also, to me, the long-range challenge is migration and the stimulation of mass migration because of climate change, particularly in the equatorial band. Do you agree that this is a serious national security threat as well as an environmental threat?

Dr. KAHL. There is no question it is a national security threat for all of the reasons you mentioned. Changing weather patterns and rising seas are going to displace hundreds of millions of people. You are also likely to see other humanitarian and food crises that drive displacement issues. We have already seen, just our hemisphere, the displacement by recent hurricanes in places like the Northern Triangle and Central America. So this problem is not going to go away and it is going to continue to get worse.

Senator KING. Thank you. Thank you for your thoughtful testimony this morning.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator King. Let me recognize Senator Cramer, please.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the hearing. Thank you, Dr. Kahl, and thank you for our discussion a couple of weeks ago. I enjoyed it very much, and I look forward to more of them.

I was not going to bring up any of the political issues until you responded to Senator Tillis. I just have to address the Russian collusion question. I think he asked a pretty straightforward question, after Russian collusion has been deemed to be basically a lie by the Mueller report and the bipartisan Senate committee report. I think you started out your response to his question about your tweets pretty good, pretty well. You said that they were a reflection of media reports at the time. I just wish you would have continued to say now that the media have been proven to be liars, I no longer believe that, rather than trying to rationalize it by changing the definition of collusion.

But I want to get into some policy things so I am not going to spend a lot of time there. You can respond later. But I do want to piggyback a little bit on what Senator Rounds was asking you, and you and I talked about this, about the importance of the triad, not a dyad, but the importance of the triad, and I appreciate your personal view that the triad is important, both in the past and going forward.

But I want to be real clear. Do you believe that the Minuteman-III can continue to be serviced? As you know, these are decades-old weapons systems, and can their life be extended without some consequence?

Dr. KAHL. So my knowledge of the life extension programs on the Minuteman-III is four years old, so I do not have the classified



analysis. I have, of course, seen the public statements by the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM) commander. I have no reason to question those statements. So obviously this will be an issue that I will dig into more if I am confirmed, but I have no reason to disbelieve the STRATCOM commander.

Senator CRAMER. Well, if you believe the STRATCOM commander then that is pretty good advice, I would say, and I will not get further into the funding ramp for GBSD, because we really are, I think, at the end of the rope and cannot change that trajectory much, so I look forward to you digging into that more.

Part of it is because you said something, I think it was in your opening statement or maybe in one of the early questions, about deterring China means that China cannot believe they can win, or something. That is a paraphrase, a paraphrase of lots of statements that are similar. I just think that the deterrent that the triad provides, and the modernization that includes the LRSOs [Long Range Stand Off Weapons], the re-engineering of the bombers that we have at Minot, GBSD that we have at Minot are all important parts of that.

You talked a little bit about the Abraham Accords, and I would just ask you, in a more specific way, how have the Abraham Accords changed the landscape, if you will? It is interesting you said four years ago, like four years is a long time, except it is a long time. It is amazing what has happened in four years. So maybe you could just elaborate on that a little bit.

Dr. KAHL. Yeah. I think the Abraham Accords, I give the Trump administration credit for getting the Abraham Accords across the goal line. I think it is the culmination of set of trends, frankly, that have been in the region for about a decade. One is a common assessment of the Iranian threat, which has moved Israel closer to many of its Arab neighbors. Two is a concern for various extreme forms of Islamism—al Qaeda, ISIS, the Muslim Brotherhood. Another factor, I think, is a perception that the region needs to rely more on itself, and so that has pushed Israel and its neighbors together.

So I commend the Trump administration for leaning into those strategic trends, and the Abraham Accords are something I think we should continue to encourage.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you. Now one more thing, because I have really—again, I have enjoyed this very much, this discussion today, especially in the honestly policy disagreements. I really appreciated your answers to Senator Shaheen about Nord Stream 2. We know this is a continuation of policies by this government, and we have great concern. But it had not occurred to me until just a little bit ago how directly connected Nord Stream 2 is to not only national security but to climate change. I would like you, if you could, to speak just a little bit on a good alternative to Russian oil to our European allies, and that might be American LNG [Liquefied Natural Gas], which is produced and delivered with about a 46 percent lower emissions, greenhouse gas emissions. So it both is, as I said, a national security benefit as well as a greenhouse gas emissions benefit.

Dr. KAHL. Well, Senator, obviously I am not an environmental expert or an expert on LNG. I do think there is a good argument

that LNG is an important bridge fuel to a more carbon-neutral fuel mix, our energy mix, but I would have to look into the issue more to give you a better answer.

Senator CRAMER. I appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Cramer, and now via WebEx, Senator Rosen.

Senator ROSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want to thank Dr. Kahl for being here today and for his willingness to serve. I appreciated our conversation the other day, especially about University of Minnesota.

But today I want to focus on Iranian aggression a little bit. Last year, Senator Toomey and I co-lead a bipartisan resolution, co-sponsored by 58 Senators, that called on the U.N. to extend the arms embargo on Iran. That embargo, which limited the flow of sophisticated weapons to Iran and restricted Iran's ability to provide its terrorist proxies with arms, it expired last October. The practical effect of this is that Iran is now free, under international law, to purchase and transfer a wide array of weapons.

So while the United States arms embargo on Iran remains in place, we cannot succeed alone. Dr. Kahl, if you are confirmed, how will you work to curb the flow of conventional weapons to and from Iran?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I think the U.N. vote is an example of the challenges we face when we cannot bring the rest of the world to our side, and so I think the Biden administration's commitment, and my personal commitment, if I am confirmed, to rebuild our alliances and partners will go a long way in getting the world closer to our views on Iran.

I do not think there is a silver bullet to address the very real threat that Iran's destabilizing activities, to include its conventional arms and its arms supply to its proxies in the region, but I think there is a mix of activities, consistent with international law. We should support interdiction efforts, where those are possible. We should be building up the capabilities of our regional allies so that they can counterbalance and check Iran. We should be helping vulnerable countries like Iraq and Lebanon build institutions that are more resilient to Iranian influence. Obviously, when Iran takes actions against our own forces we should defend ourselves and punch back. So I think there is a mix of policies. No one is likely to solve this problem.

Senator ROSEN. Building on that, we do need those partners to deter Iranian aggression, and we want to stop the transfers of conventional arms to terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, and we want to ensure freedom of navigation in that region's waterways. So what can we do in that regard?

Dr. KAHL. Well, in the first instance I think even as we right-size our presence in the Middle East we need to remain postured to deter Iranian aggression and to work alongside our allies and partners on precisely the issues that you mention. You know, the specific requirements for that will probably require me to be in the Department and get more deeply briefed on the issue.

But this is important to me. I am clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses, and so if I am confirmed I look forward to digging

into more specifics and working with you, Senator, and others on this committee, on this issue, because I think there should be bipartisan agreement on the need to push back on Iran in this area.

Senator ROSEN. Also considering all the issues in this area, this region of the world, if confirmed, how will the Department of Defense work to maintain and enhance Israel's QME to ensure their security and safety in the region as we talk about the many threats against them?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. Well, Senator, this is an issue that is very personal to me. When I was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East I was heavily focused on ensuring Israel's QME, even as we were building up the capabilities of other actors in the region to counterbalance Iran. As you know, there were large arms sales to the UAE, to Saudi Arabia, and others, but as we did that, at least when I was at the Pentagon, we were always mindful that anything we did had to respect our commitment to Israel, to ensure that they remained at the cutting edge and achieved a qualitative military edge against any combination of states in the region.

Senator ROSEN. Quickly, I want to just address cyberspace. DOD, the cyber strategy is outlined as a defend-forward approach. So in the wake of SolarWinds, if you are confirmed, how do you plan to alter DOD's cyber strategy to reflect the current threats and challenges that we see, particularly in cyberspace?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you for that. As I mentioned earlier, I support the defend forward position. I am obviously not privy to classified operations that have happened in the context of that approach, but I support the general approach. I think it is only part of the equation. We not only have to be able to defend forward, we have to be able to engage in offensive action in response to malign activity. We have to be better at defending our networks. The SolarWinds incident is a reminder of the vulnerability across the U.S. Government in that regard. Our networks have to be more resilient so they bounce back further, and we have to work, as I discussed with Senator King, we have to work alongside our allies on new norms and rules of the road to really constrain our adversaries.

So if I am confirmed, I would look to make sure DOD strategy in this area, both the National Defense Strategy and the cyber strategy, reflects these different principles, and I look forward to working closely with United States Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) and others on that issue, as well as members of this Committee, who I know are deeply committed to cybersecurity.

Senator ROSEN. Well, again, my time has expired. Thank you for being here. I look forward to working with you as well. Thank you.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Rosen. Now let me recognize Senator Blackburn via WebEx.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, thank you for joining us and thank you for your time this past week to discuss some of these issues.

There has been discussion about your inflammatory rhetoric and the claims that you have made on Twitter. I think you realize that this is of concern to many of us on the committee because your language is really not representative the way a top policy official at

the Pentagon should write about policy, and whether it is for a domestic or an international audience.

So this is something that you have put out there, regardless of tone. What is interesting to me, as I have gone back and read some of your predictions, is how wrong and off-base you were on these predictions. You have talked about being there in policy and the ability to participate in the interagency discussion. So I want to just ask you some yes-and-no questions, for the record.

Do you still believe that sanctions relief to Tehran will go toward the domestic investment and not support terrorism?

Dr. KAHL. I do not know what the current intelligence assessments suggest. My previous statements were based on——

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes or no?

Dr. KAHL. I do not know the answer to that, because I do not know the current assessment.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. Do you still believe that al Qaeda is a bigger threat to Washington than Moscow?

Dr. KAHL. That al Qaeda is a bigger threat to Washington than Moscow?

Senator BLACKBURN. Yeah, which is something that you had tweeted out on April 23, 2012.

Dr. KAHL. I think that al Qaeda remains a significant threat to the United States.

Senator BLACKBURN. You claimed several times that Trump administration responses to Iranian aggression would lead directly to war. Did they?

Dr. KAHL. I think that they were part of a cycle of provocation on both sides. They brought us really close to war on at least two occasions.

Senator BLACKBURN. You know they did not. You made a similar prediction about the likeliness of a “massive war,” using your word, on the Korean peninsula. Did that happen?

Dr. KAHL. It did not.

Senator BLACKBURN. You claimed that the United States strike on Soleimani would get the United States, your words, “kicked out of Iraq.” Did it?

Dr. KAHL. The Iraqi Parliament voted to get rid of United States Forces, but our forces are still there.

Senator BLACKBURN. Yes. You claimed that relocation of the United States Embassy to Jerusalem, which is a bill I had when I was in the House for a few years, bipartisan, by the way, would lead to our provocations there. Did that happen?

Dr. KAHL. I think it worsened relations with the Palestinians but it did not worsen relationships with other Arab states.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. Let me move on. Strategic patience. We talked about this. What does that mean to you?

Dr. KAHL. I think it probably means different things to different people. I am not a subscriber of strategic patience. I think that the issues that we have talked about in the hearing today, and there are many others, are urgent issues that need to be tackled immediately——

Senator BLACKBURN. Would you say that applies to North Korea?

Dr. KAHL. I think that North Korea——

Senator BLACKBURN. To China?

Dr. KAHL. I am sorry, Senator. There is a little bit of a lag in the technology. I believe that the North Korean threat is increasing, both its nuclear and its long-range intercontinental ballistic missile threat to the United States. It is an issue that needs to be addressed urgently. It is also an issue that has built up over decades, so it is not likely to be solved overnight. But that does not mean that we should sit on our hands and not do anything about it.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. Let's talk about Pacific deterrence. Current top Pentagon leadership has identified China as the "pacing challenge" for the Department. If confirmed, how would you work with the combatant commands to balance the long-term vision of policy against the resources that the commanders need right now?

Dr. KAHL. I think China is an example of where we do not have the luxury of choosing between doing things now and also planning for the long term. We have to do both, because China poses a clear and immediate challenge to United States interests and allies in the Indo-Pacific, so we have to make sure that right now our forces are ready and lethal, that they are as distributed and resilient as possible, that we are as integrated with our allies and partners as possible, but we also need to be making the investments as a nation and as a department in the types of capabilities down the line that will determine who wins the competition for the 21st century. That means artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other cutting-edge technologies.

So this is an area where we have to do both.

Senator BLACKBURN. Okay. I have a couple of questions that I will submit for QFRs. Thank you for your time.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Blackburn. Let me recognize Senator Warren via WebEx.

Senator WARREN. All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and, Dr. Kahl, it is good to see you again. Congratulations on your nomination. Thank you for your willingness to take on this important and challenging position.

So I really enjoyed our conversation last week. As you know, I have long been concerned about civilians who are harmed as a result of our overseas military operations. I have introduced two separate comprehensive bills to improve transparency and reporting of civilian casualties, as well as strengthen how we investigate and address cases when civilians are harmed by U.S. or U.S.-led military operations.

Now you have written persuasively on the need for stronger measures to track and learn from civilian casualties in order to prevent unnecessary harm in the future. If you are confirmed, will you commit to finding ways to bolster DOD's response to civilian casualties, for example, by dedicating resources to investigate, address, and understand patterns of civilian harm?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, Senator, I am strongly committed on this issue. We need to be more transparent. The reporting needs to be better. There have to be the right investigations and steps in place to address civilian harm, however inadvertent, when our military is engaged in operations. So I know there is a DOD instruction that is

being written as we speak. If I am confirmed, I look forward to digging into that and working with you and others on this issue to minimize civilian harm, moving forward.

Senator WARREN. Good. Well, I really appreciate that. You know, over the last several fiscal years Congress has provided the DOD with funding to make offers ex gratia of payments to civilians harmed in the U.S. and U.S.-led coalition operations, and these are cash payments. Yet as I understand it, very few payments have been made, and no claims process exists.

So can you commit to reviewing this issue expeditiously and working to find ways to establish an effective claims process for families and survivors of military operations?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, I commit to that.

Senator WARREN. Dr. Kahl, some of my colleagues have criticized the Iran nuclear deal because it did not address Iran's ballistic missile program and because of the sunset provisions. They believe that the deal did not put Iran's nuclear program in a box. I think it is worth setting the record straight on just a few things. So I just want to ask you, the Iran nuclear deal placed strict limits on Iran's ability to enrich uranium needed for a nuclear weapon. During the deal, was Iran complying with those limits?

Dr. KAHL. According to about a dozen IAEA reports prior to President Trump's withdrawal from the agreement, Iran had been in compliance.

Senator WARREN. Yes, and since the Trump administration pulled out of the deal, has Iran exceeded the limits imposed by the deal?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, in a number of areas.

Senator WARREN. Yes. So today, is Iran's breakout time to have a nuclear weapon shorter than it was when Trump went against our allies and pulled out of the deal?

Dr. KAHL. According to open source analysis it is currently down to three or four months. It was at at least a year at the end of the Obama administration.

Senator WARREN. Okay. So Iran's nuclear program was actually in a box when the deal was in force, and they are now closer to having enough material to make a nuclear weapon today than they were under the deal. I guess we can all thank President Trump for making Iran even more dangerous today. Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Kahl, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Warren. Let me now recognize Senator Tuberville.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, thank you for your service. We had a good phone call the other day. I love your statement about this is a nonpolitical position. This is a policy position, trying to help our military and things in front of us, because we have got problems.

In 2016, three NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries, including the United States, they met their defense spend. Only three. Now we have got most of them involved in it. How do you stand on that?

Dr. KAHL. I think it is important that all the NATO countries live up to their commitments that were made at Wales in 2014, the 2 percent threshold that you mentioned, and I am glad that more

of those countries are turning in that direction, but we can do better.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Will you stay on top of it?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, sir.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thanks for answering the nuclear triad question earlier, but just a yes-or-no question. Do you support the funding of GBSD and LRSD modernization? Will you support that funding?

Dr. KAHL. So I support modernization efforts, as a general matter. This is an area where I need to get briefed on the details, but I have no reason to question the STRATCOM commander's assessment on the needs of modernization. So once I get more deeply briefed on this I will come back and talk to you, but as I said, I support the triad.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Yeah, thank you. You know, the Houthis in Yemen, they are coming after the Saudis pretty good, and they are being backed by Iran, and Iran is playing games. Houthis are pretty good fighters, and we are going to have some problems. So what are your thoughts about that?

Dr. KAHL. I think that Yemen is one of the more vexing and tragic circumstances in the world. The Houthis are not good actors, but the war itself has also brought about the greatest humanitarian disaster in the world, at least pre-COVID, and COVID has actually made it worse. I do not think that our support for the Saudi coalition has been very effective in pushing back Houthi influence. I think the best strategy for reducing Houthi influence is moving towards a peace agreement that changes the nature of that government.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Tell me what you think about Russia's economy.

Dr. KAHL. You know, I am not an expert on Russia's economy. I will say, in general, that Russia is very reliant on its energy resources. There are a lot of fundamentals of Russia's economy and demographics that are not in Moscow's favor. Now some people take solace in that. I actually think it makes Russia more dangerous in the near term, because I think that Putin sees Russia as a country that used to be great and that is now on the decline and is trying to make the most of the power they have left before they sunset.

Anyway, I hope that answers your question.

Senator TUBERVILLE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Tuberville. Senator Peters, please.

Senator PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, it is good to see you here and congratulations on your nomination.

I want to pick up on the Yemen issue, if I may. In advanced questions you expressed, if I am correct, and correct me if I am wrong, you expressed an understanding that the United States lacks sufficient insight into civilian casualty rates in Yemen, and yet an analysis by Rand reports that 110,000 Yemenis have been killed as a direct result of fighting, including 12,000 civilians. Indirectly, at least 150,000 children, age 5 and under, have died from starvation, the result of Houthis diverting humanitarian food ship-

ments as well as Saudi-led coalition air strikes on food storage and distribution infrastructure.

You responded to a previous question and acknowledged the fact that this is a major humanitarian crisis. I could argue this is perhaps the largest humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Please explain why you do not have visibility of the casualties when they seem to be fairly clear, and given the casualties, and given the fact that this is a major humanitarian crisis, how would you advise the President and folks at the Department of Defense that we need a policy that is dealing with this, and we need it now?

Dr. KAHL. So I agree with you completely, and I am aware of the estimates that you mentioned. I think the APQ [advance policy question] answer was largely in terms of precision, that is, the precise number of civilian casualties may not be known to the Department, but I have no reason to question the outside assessment. It is not just that tens of thousands have been killed and wounded, but millions have been pushed to the brink of starvation, or are starving as we speak. I agree with your assessment, that it is the worst humanitarian disaster on the planet.

I supported President Biden's decision, as I think there was bipartisan support as well, to cut off assistance to the Saudi-led campaign and to take other steps to make sure humanitarian aid was actually getting into Yemen. But this problem is not going to be resolved until there is a peace settlement, so I support the Biden administration's efforts to reinvigorate that process.

Senator PETERS. As we look at the future of conflict, or I should say the conflict we are in right now, it is probably best described as a conflict between authoritarian regimes and democracy, a classic battle between two ideologies, one that has existed through history, but we can see, at least in recent times, that conflict escalating, with a number of our adversaries that are working to undermine democracy and to further autocratic governments across the planet.

So given that, to what extent should we be thinking differently about some of our defense policy, understanding that the conflict that we may have with our adversaries may be less in the realm of direct combat, although that is certainly possible, that we need to be adequately prepared for that. But a lot of the conflict is going to be in the realm of gray zones. It is going to be in the realm of adversaries trying to undermine Western or democracies where they may be, undermine democracies from within and also using other activities that are less than outright combat. Are we adequately prepared for this evolving, serious threat, and if not, what do we need to do?

Dr. KAHL. So I think there is a dawning recognition about the challenge that you face. I think the new Interim National Security Strategic Guidance that the administration released yesterday framed the issues very much along the lines that you did, that authoritarianism is on the rise. For more than a decade now, we have had a global democratic recession, that is the number of democracies slipping, and not just over there but among advanced industrial democracies.

My own view is that we have to rally what used to be called the free world, that is the other advanced democracies and like-minded



states, to address issues like cyberattacks, disinformation, but also things like weaponized corruption, energy coercion, supply chain vulnerabilities. The dawning recognition among democracies that they face common challenges from Russia, China, and other authoritarian powers is an opportunity for us, as the United States, to lead in all of those areas.

Senator PETERS. Well, one thing that we must lead, in my mind, is in moral leadership, in order to rally those democracies as the United States has always been that shining city on the hill, that has led in terms of moral issues.

At what point does our support of Saudi Arabia make moral leadership difficult in the world?

Dr. KAHL. Well, as President Biden often says, it is important that we not only lead through the example of our power but the power of our example, and I think in recent years there has been a greater and greater disconnect between American values and the values put forth by the government in Saudi Arabia. I support the Administration's efforts to recalibrate that relationship and to hold Saudi officials accountable, and to relook at every aspect of that relationship to make sure it conforms, not just with our interests but our values.

Senator PETERS. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Peters. Now let me recognize Senator Sullivan for the traditional five-minute round.

[Laughter.]

Senator SULLIVAN. I hope Senator Inhofe is not timing me on this. Sorry about my reputation in that regard.

Dr. Kahl, thanks for our meeting. I appreciate our discussion. If confirmed, can you commit again to come to Alaska to see the Arctic and the great power competition that the Pentagon often forgets about, up in that part of the world, with me?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. There is no question that strategic importance of the Arctic is going up.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. So, Dr. Kahl, I think a lot of us are trying to figure out a critical issue, that are you a balanced, measured, national security professional who can help lead the Pentagon, or, to be a little bit more frank, are you a political hack who has a history of going off on Twitter, attacking those who do not share your politics? This is a free country, and you are certainly allowed to do that. But I do think it is a critical issue. Senator Tillis stated less than a year ago several Senators, Republicans and Democrats, had concerns about a nominee for the exact position you are being nominated for, that the White House ended up withdrawing the nomination.

Mr. Chairman, I have a letter from several Senate Democrats, many of whom are on this committee, who raised concerns about this nominee, General Tata, who said, quote, "he was not qualified because of his record of inflammatory comments, which disqualify him," and including comments against Members of Congress.

I think your comments about all Republicans are now the party of ethnic cleansing is pretty strong stuff. Again, free country. You can say whatever the heck you want. I believe in that, but sometimes these kind of statements have consequences.

So this is actually more for my colleagues who wrote this letter. I think you guys have some explaining to do. It is very analogous what is going on here, very analogous. So I will leave that to my Armed Services colleagues, many of whom were on this letter.

Senator Kaine, I agree with him a lot. This is a very bipartisan committee. He said your nomination is about the JCPOA. I would say it is actually broader than that, and I do want to correct my friend. The JCPOA was the first agreement in U.S. history that passed with a partisan minority in the House and Senate. So when Senator Kaine says Republicans were against it, Democrats were for it, he is incorrect. A partisan majority of Republicans and Democrats were against it in both the House and the Senate. But I agree with Senator Kaine that the concerns about your record on Iran are a critical element of your confirmation.

So let me just ask a few questions. The JCPOA provided over \$100 billion in sanctions relief, despite Iran's continuing malign activities. Those malign activities increased—\$1.8 billion in cash on an airplane. Do you agree that Iran now is, and has remained for the previous two administrations, the foremost state sponsor of terrorism in the world?

Dr. KAHL. Yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. What I worry about with your policy positions is they do not seem to have redlines with Iran, and as you know, it is important for the United States to determine redlines, and which it is critical to not allow countries to cross. When we have taken tough actions against the terrorist regime in Iran, you, as my colleagues have mentioned, have often cried out that it is going to lead to war.

So let me ask this. Does the killing and wounding of over 2,000 Americans constitute a redline that we should take action against Iran on?

Dr. KAHL. I support taking action against Iran and its proxies when they threaten our forces. When I was at the Pentagon as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense I supported our action by, with, and through the Iraqis, to go after these proxy networks, to include, in 2011, when we saw a very concerning increase in rocket attacks that were causing American casualties. I was a strong proponent of hitting back, not just with the Iraqis but unilaterally.

Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Chairman, this is a serious question, and my final one. It is a sensitive and it is going to take a minute, so I do apologize but I want to get it on the record, and it is sensitive. It is an important issue. Some might criticize me for even asking it, but I am going to ask it.

In your opening statement, you said you wanted to, quote, "end systemic racism within the ranks of the military." Now I care deeply about this issue. In fact, I put forward legislation last year that passed in the NDAA, that looks at elements of this issue. I know you have not served in the ranks of the military yourself, but can you break that statement down a bit? It is a serious statement to say that there is systematic racism within the ranks of the military. The FBI director, for example, two days ago, in hearings, was asked this question, and he said there was not systemic racism in the FBI.

I have served 26 years in the United States Marine Corps, still serving. Very diverse units, racially [inaudible] arms units. I have seen one serious incident, just in my personal experience of racism, where, as a young marine, I took action to stamp that out.

What data or information are you basing that statement on? It is a big statement, and I am curious about that.

Dr. KAHL. So I spent much of my government service working alongside men and women in uniform. I have extraordinary respect for all of them. My personal experience is that the overwhelming majority of people in the armed services conduct themselves with honor and dignity and are tolerant. I think there is a small minority that have violent extremist views. I think the events of January 6th—

Senator SULLIVAN. Do you have data on that, because systemic racism—

Dr. KAHL. I do not think we have credible data on the amount.

Senator SULLIVAN. It is really important to get data on this before you paint with such a broad brush, is my point.

Dr. KAHL. So I did not mean to imply that there is systemic racism among the ranks. I think there is systemic—

Senator SULLIVAN. So that is what your statement said.

Dr. KAHL. What I am saying, Senator, is that I think that there is a minority, and I agree with you that we need better data on this, that we should not tolerate people who combine racist views with violent tendencies, in the military or anywhere else.

Senator SULLIVAN. I could not agree more with you.

Dr. KAHL. That there have been barriers to advancement and the need for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the armed services—

Senator SULLIVAN. That is what my legislation looks at—

Dr. KAHL.—looks at.

Senator SULLIVAN. But I agree we need more data. It is important to get data on this really important issue. I cannot agree with you more. It is important, but that data on it, before we make those statements.

Dr. KAHL. So I support the need to get better data on it, and, if confirmed, I also look forward to working with you on this, because I know it is an issue that is important to you.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN.—Senator Inhofe.

Chairman REED. No, Senator. You are getting better.

Senator SULLIVAN. That was an important issue.

Chairman REED. Now I would like to recognize Senator Duckworth via WebEx, please.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this very important hearing, and, Dr. Kahl, good to see you again. We had a great conversation yesterday. Today, though, I would like to focus on the current pacing threat for the Department of Defense, competition with the PRC [People's Republic of China]. I know you have already had this discussion a little bit today already, and I also thank my colleague from Hawaii, Senator Hirono, for bringing this up also.

I have long been an advocate for increased military-to-military cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and I think you will agree that we are stronger and more secure when we work with our allies and partners to confront changes and challenges. In particular, I believe we must move quickly to strengthen existing relationships in Southeast Asia, in particular, and form new ones. These partnerships are vital to building our presence in the region and providing a check on the PRC government, which has shown that unless it is challenged it will attempt to single-handedly dictate terms for the entire region. Our cooperation cannot be limited to DOD alone, and I believe that a whole-of-society approach, that includes greater diplomatic and economic engagement, is necessary for success.

Can you please outline some key policy opportunities you see to improve our strategic partnerships in Southeast Asia? In your answer, please make sure to address how DOD can support agencies' efforts in this critical region.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I think the biggest opportunity is the growing concern and recognition that a more assertive China has produced. That is, I think that a lot of our allies and partners are nervous. Frankly, I think that the pandemic and China's early coverup of the pandemic and some of its heavy-handed, wolf warrior diplomacy during the pandemic has also created opportunities for us to lean in with countries who are increasingly worried about Beijing.

I could not agree with you more about the importance of emphasizing our alliances and our partnerships. It is one of the biggest asymmetric advantages that the United States has. No other global power has the network of allies and partners that we have, and if I am confirmed, a huge part of my job will be in nurturing those relationships. I think we have enormous opportunities in the Indo-Pacific. I think that the last administration made some important strides in this area, as did the Obama administration. I think we have opportunities to work not just with our treaty allies, like Japan and South Korea and Australia and the Philippines, but with countries like Singapore and Vietnam, and others in Asia, and I think there are growing opportunities with India.

So I actually think this is an area where we have enormous possibility.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. If you are confirmed, would you commit to working with me to explore innovative ideas to improve mil-to-mil partnerships in the region, instead of just working with the Department of State to expand the IMET [International Military Education and Training] program, or perhaps using the Army Corps of Engineers to help flooding or other opportunities like that?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. I commit to working with you and to everybody else on the committee on those issues, because I do think, you know, there is no monopoly on good ideas on either side of the aisle or among any of us. So, you know, it needs to be one team, one fight.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you. I want to return to this issue of racism within the military. People of color, and women, can face significant systemic barriers to maintain successful careers in the Department of Defense. I saw it—it is why I had two children at

the age of 46 and 50—because in order to pursue my career I had to postpone pregnancy. So there are systemic barriers to women and to people of color. This leads to a lack of diversity at the top levels of DOD, military, and civilian leadership, and in certain communities, like this is especially true like Special Operations.

If confirmed, how would you personally work to increase diversity in the DOD leadership, both civilian and uniform, and include people of color and women so they can contribute to the mission, and ensure that everyone in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has the necessary support to succeed professionally?

Dr. KAHL. I think everybody in the DOD leadership has an obligation to break down barriers to the advancement of women and people of color. I agree 100 percent that the top ranks, both civilian and military, do not reflect the diversity of the United States. I think we are stronger, as a country, when our workforce, including our national security workforce, reflects the full diversity that our country brings to bear. I think that is another one of our asymmetric advantages, one that we are not taking advantage of enough, because there is not enough diversity, equity, and inclusion.

So you have my commitment, if I am confirmed as the Under Secretary, that in the organization that I would lead that I would look for opportunities to retain and promote the talent that we already have, and as we hire and bring on new folks, to make sure that this is a major priority, that we are expanding the diversity of our workforce, and then more broadly in the Department, working with Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks on this issue, because I know it is a big priority for them as well.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman REED. Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth. Let me recognize Senator Hawley.

Senator HAWLEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Kahl, let me start in the same place as Senator Duckworth did, with our pacing theater. Deputy Secretary of Defense Hicks, when she was here a few weeks ago, agreed that it is essential to strengthen our deterrents against China, that we maintain the ability to defeat a Chinese fait accompli with regard to Taiwan. Do you agree with that.

Dr. KAHL. I do.

Senator HAWLEY. Do you agree with her also that a strategy of denial is essential for deterring Chinese aggression?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. Denial both in the sense of building up Taiwan's capabilities and our capabilities to prevent the exact scenario that you outlined.

Senator HAWLEY. Good, and would you also agree that the threat from the PRC is an imminent threat, not just a threat in 10 or 15 or 20 years, but an imminent threat to our security now?

Dr. KAHL. I think it is a growing threat to our security, and it is a challenge that is urgent now, and is only going to get worse as the years go on.

Senator HAWLEY. So let me ask you this. Our pacing theater is INDOPACOM. You spent your career focused on the Middle East, however. So let me just ask you. I mean, why would we confirm

another Middle East hand to lead the Department of Defense when we are trying to steer the Department's focus towards PACOM?

Dr. KAHL. Well, as I suspect you know, Senator, I was trained as a generalist. I am international security and conflict specialist. Like a lot of people with my background, our attention focused on the Middle East. I am not a Middle East person by training. It was a byproduct of 9/11 and the wars that followed, that and the service that I spent after that.

As the National Security Advisor to Vice President Biden, I had responsibility for the world. I was a member of the Deputies Committee, you know, leading discussions on China, Russia, Ukraine, Central America, Ebola, cyber, North Korea, and much of my academic work in recent years has been on emerging technologies and the geopolitical consequences of the pandemic.

So I think of myself as a generalist who knows a little bit about the Middle East, as opposed to a Middle East Expert who knows a little bit about the rest of the world.

Senator HAWLEY. I know that you previously worked on the pivot to Asia during the Obama administration. That is frankly part of what concerns me. It was not a successful pivot. Let me ask you about some of the challenges we are going to have in pivoting now.

You said that troops in Afghanistan, troop levels should be tied to conditions on the ground, and that any withdrawal should support diplomatic efforts and be executed in close consultation with our NATO resolute support partners. Does that mean that you do not support the peace agreement reached by the previous administration?

Dr. KAHL. I think we need a negotiated solution. My concern with the United States-Taliban agreement that the previous administration negotiated—and I should caveat this by saying I am not privy to the intelligence assessments—but based on reporting and open source materials, the Taliban does not appear to be living up to its commitments, either in the letter or the spirit of that agreement. So I would want to make sure that we are defending our interests. I do not think that the forever war in Afghanistan should go on forever, but I do believe that we have vital interests there—

Senator HAWLEY. How are we going to end it?

Dr. KAHL. Well, I think we are going to end it through peaceful negotiation. Part of that—

Senator HAWLEY. Will we keep thousands of troops there, in theater.

Dr. KAHL. Well, first of all, I need to get briefed on the current threat matrix. A lot of my information on ISIS, Khorasan, or the Taliban or al Qaeda is four years out of date in the classified domain. My belief is that we need to remain postured in the region to deal with the residual counterterrorism issues that arise from groups like al Qaeda and ISIS.

The exact force mix that that may require in Afghanistan versus elsewhere is something I will have to dig into, and, if confirmed, I look forward to talking to you about this.

Senator HAWLEY. Here is what I am trying to figure out. Based on the comments that the President has made, including at the Munich Security Conference, and others he made on the campaign,

and based on the initial steps taken by the administration, it looks like this administration foresees major engagement across at least three theaters, while, at the same time, essentially relieving the pressure on NATO burden-sharing. I am trying to figure out how the accounts balance. I mean, you also envisioned flat defense spending.

So how are we going to prioritize the Indo-Pacific, how are we going to prioritize the growing and, indeed, imminent security threat from China, while also engaging heavily in Europe, engaging heavily in CENTCOM, without any rebalancing in those places? Can you just give me your—this is, obviously, a huge problem. The last administration encountered the same problem. What are your thoughts on this?

Dr. KAHL. So the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance that the administration released yesterday racked and stacked the regions. You know, we have interests in all the regions—we are a global power. We have interests everywhere. But there are certain regions where it will need to be more of an economy of effort. I think the Indo-Pacific is number one with a bullet for security and economic reasons; Europe is probably number two, because of the challenge that Russia poses to us and the NATO alliance, and because NATO is a force multiplier for us, globally. So I would put Indo-Pacific and Europe one and two. The Western Hemisphere is always an interest of ours, going back to the founding of the republic, but more of an economy of effort. I think we need to right-size our presence in the Middle East and Central Asia, along the lines that we just discussed, precisely because of the accelerating pace of great power competition, which I think the 2018 National Defense Strategy correctly kind of re-centered our focus on that. If confirmed, I would look to continue that trend.

Senator HAWLEY. Could I ask one more question, Mr. Chairman? Chairman REED. Quickly.

Senator HAWLEY. Quickly. All right. Not to imitate Senator Sullivan, but I just want to ask you about Israel. According to news reports, Dr. Kahl, you led the effort to remove recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel from the 2012 Democratic Party platform. You also reportedly staffed the effort to condemn Israel at the U.N. Security Council in late 2016, and, of course, you have spoken about against moving the embassy to Jerusalem. Do you see Israel as a valued partner? I mean, obviously, those positions are in serious tension with the interests and positions of our Israeli partners. Do you see them as a valued partner, and how are you going to respond to their concerns over these positions?

Dr. KAHL. So absolutely, and I had the opportunity earlier to go through my record on supporting Israel, so I will not recapitulate that here, but it is long.

I will just say, in 2012, the platform that I was involved in writing simply represented the U.S. official policy at the time, which was the same policy as in the Bush administration, which was not to formally recognize Jerusalem because it was a final status issue. The platform was amended, and I had no problem with the amendment. The embassy has been moved. I support President Biden's policy on that, not to move it back.

So I do not imagine this will cause any concerns in Israel or elsewhere if I were to be confirmed for this position. Just for the record, I had zero involvement in the U.N. Security Council resolution, in pushing for it or otherwise, in 2016.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Hawley. Senator Kelly, please.

Senator KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Dr. Kahl, for your testimony today.

So with the recent SolarWinds hack that is fresh in our minds, what is your perspective on how we address the vulnerability in our digital architecture, that the U.S. Government relies on, including the Department of Defense?

Dr. KAHL. Yeah. First of all, I could not agree with you more about—look, I would not describe SolarWinds as a wake-up call, and I know you are not doing that either. I think it is just the latest reminder of how vulnerable our networks are. As I mentioned earlier, I think this is a vulnerability that has only increased as a consequence of the pandemic, because so much of our daily lives has migrated online. You know, I have a nine-year-old daughter and a six-year-old son, and they are doing fourth grade and kindergarten, you know, on Zoom, every day. But our enterprises, our institutions—you know, luckily, the Department of Defense is unclassified networks. While being exposed, we are not compromised. But huge portions of the U.S. Government appear to have been compromised by this, at the unclassified level.

So if I am confirmed, it is an issue I need to dig into more deeply, but we need to make sure that our networks are defended and resilient in the face of this, because these attacks by Russia and other countries are not going to go away. China, North Korea, Iran, and non-state actors are all looking to go after us in the cyber domain.

Senator KELLY. How did we get here, though? Did we make decisions early on and take basically off-the-shelf technology and modify it for government and defense purposes? Could we have done something different? If we could have, do we want to make those changes now?

Dr. KAHL. So I am not sure about the forensics. You know, I think the autopsy has yet to be conducted. But there are few things that are more important. I know that the Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technology, Anne Neuberger, is looking at this issue. I would hope that in really digging into the SolarWinds incident we can answer precisely the questions you raise, which is how did we get so vulnerable, not just our networks but the supply chains, which is how this particular attack happened, and what can we do to make those networks more resilient in the future.

So if I am confirmed, I would anticipate participating in that interagency conversation, and as I learn more I would hope to come back to talk to you about it.

Senator KELLY. It is critical we figure out a way out of this situation, because if we do not, this is going to continue to happen.

So when we spoke yesterday we discussed some technology, like artificial intelligence, just briefly, quantum computing, that is going to define the next century. So how do we align our defense



policy to meet the requirements that result from the advancements of these technologies?

Dr. KAHL. Well, as you mentioned, Senator, we are only at the very beginning of a whole host of emerging disruptive technologies that will, frankly, define the nature of life for the rest of this century. We are in the process of the digitization of everything. We are literally seeing zeroes and ones turned into living beings, and beings turned into zeroes and ones through things like synthetic biology. Quantum computing is going to revolutionize a whole array of issues with implications for national security. Hypersonics, directed energy—these are all things.

So I think as we craft our National Defense Strategy and then form a budget around that, we have to be prioritizing investments in these areas, because we know that China is. We know they are. We know they are committed to spending hundreds of billions of dollars precisely to plant the flag on the very technologies that they understand will determine the strategic competition for the rest of this century.

So if we are not doing the same—and, by the way, it is not just DOD. We need to be investing in STEM [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] science and technology education, research and development, investing in our research institutions. It is a whole-of-government effort, because it is a whole-of-government effort in Beijing, so it has to be here.

Senator KELLY. Yeah, I could not agree more. I mean, it is what we have done very well as a country for decades—innovation. We know that the Chinese will be following us, and the amount of money they spend in research and development now is basically the same as we have over the last couple of years. We, fortunately, have the one thing that they do not have, and that is the creativity, and a democracy that allows people to be creative, and, you know, to think outside the box. We have got to invest in that. That includes investing in STEM education and research and development, and to make sure that we have these domestic production capabilities here. That will keep us ahead of our competitors.

Thank you for your testimony.

Dr. KAHL. Thank you.

Chairman REED. Thank you, Senator Kelly. Now let me recognize the ranking member for his concluding comments.

Senator INHOFE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we probably have run out of interest here.

Let me just make a comment on why this is important. We have hearings like that, and we want to know, before someone is confirmed, where they stand on these issues, and I think it is perfectly appropriate. In my case I had three questions. I got two answers, and I did not get an answer on the third one. But I am going to remind, in future meetings that we have, what the answer was, to test the consistency of the witness, so we can anticipate that.

Then also we had a question that was having to do with triad modernization, by Senator Cotton. Two other members asked the same question. I did not think the answers were complete enough, and if it is all right I would like to recognize Senator Cotton to reask that question.

Senator COTTON. Thank you, Senator Inhofe. Dr. Kahl, I want to be very specific here. You gave evasive answers to Senator Rounds, Senator Cramer, and Senator Tuberville on the ground-based strategic deterrent, the replacement program for the Minuteman missile. We are pleased to hear that you support the triad, as you said, as a general matter, pleased to hear that you have no reason to question Admiral Richard, the commander of Strategic Command, that the Minuteman cannot be extended. But the simple and specific question is, do you or do you not support the continued full funding of the ground-based strategic deterrent as the future of the ground leg of the nuclear triad?

Dr. KAHL. Thank you, Senator. I am not trying to be evasive. The truth of the matter is my information on the ground-based strategic deterrent, at the classified level, is four years out of date. So it is something I will have to get a classified assessment on it, including the capabilities, the costs, and the life extension program. Based on what I know in the public domain, and what the STRATCOM commander has said, I have no reason to question those modernization efforts.

Senator COTTON. Dr. Kahl, we have seen throughout this hearing that you have no issue of expressing your strongly held opinion on matter of defense policy and foreign policy. You were nominated for this position more than two months ago. Is it really your answer to this committee that you do not have a well-informed opinion about whether the ground-based strategic deterrent is the future of the ground leg of the nuclear triad?

Dr. KAHL. I have a well-grounded opinion that all three legs of the triad need to be viable. They need to be effective, safe, secure, they need to be credible to our adversaries and our allies. As I said, I have no reason to question the STRATCOM commander's assessment. But as you know, Senator, on nuclear weapons there are issues that are highly classified, and details that I am simply not privy to. So, if confirmed, I will dig into those details and I would be happy to come back to talk to you, or anybody else on this committee, about that, if I am confirmed.

Senator COTTON. Well, it sounds like we are not going to get a straight answer. I will take that unwillingness to give a straight answer is that you probably do not think that we should continue to fund the ground-based strategic deterrent, as do many other members of your party, and I suspect that many members of this committee will too.

Chairman REED. Dr. Kahl, do you have anything further in response to the question of the ground-based triad? My sense is that you have given an answer which you are in favor of, but you want to make sure you understand all the facts at the very highest classified levels, because it is critical to not only the three legs but also the sequencing of construction projects, the status of the development of the platforms. If there is a serious issue—and I am not privy the information, but if there is a serious issue of a platform, that might cause changes within the deployment schedule.

So those are very practical concerns, and I think your answer reflected those practical concerns, and also indicated that the triad has to continue to protect the United States. Any comment?

Dr. KAHL. No, I agree with all that. I think that the triad has been a tried and true bedrock of our deterrence for decades. I think that it is important to modernize the triad because our adversaries are modernizing their capabilities, and we need a hedge against the possibility that one of the other legs of the triad becomes non-viable.

So I support the triad and our modernization efforts. My only reason to be cautious was precisely for the reasons that you identified, which is that there is classified material which is relevant to these systems that I am not privy to. If confirmed, it will be a high priority for me to get more deeply briefed on this, and at that time I would be happy to speak with this committee on that or any other issue. I think one of the things I have enjoyed, frankly, about this hearing is the degree of candor and the range of issues that have been raised.

I will just tell you this, because some of you I know better than others. You know, I am an academic by training, but I made a decision after 9/11 to value public service. I worked in the Bush administration, an administration I did not agree with on a lot of stuff. But I worked in the Pentagon because I believed in our national security and the patriotic duty of public service.

I returned to the Pentagon under a Republican Secretary of Defense, who I think very highly of, Robert Gates, and worked in a nonpartisan and bipartisan way, because I believe in public service, and that no party has a monopoly on good ideas. None of us have cracked the code on some of the toughest challenges we face, whether it be Iran or North Korea or China or Russia or anything else. So we have to be in this together. I know that there are disagreements, but I am also confident that I can work with people that I disagree with, both inside the Pentagon and here in the halls of Congress.

So if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to doing that.

Chairman REED. Well, thank you very much, Dr. Kahl. It has been a very, very thought-provoking and thoughtful discussion this morning, and much of that because of your abilities and your experience. So we thank you, and at this point I will adjourn the hearing.

[Whereupon, at 12:12 p.m., the Committee adjourned.]

[Prepared questions submitted to Dr. Colin H. Kahl by Chairman Reed prior to the hearing with answers supplied follow:]

#### QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

##### DUTIES, QUALIFICATIONS, CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES

*Question.* What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P))?

*Answer.* The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD(P)) serves as the Secretary of Defense's principal staff assistant responsible for policy development and planning; leads the formulation and coordination of national security and defense policy within the Department of Defense; and integrates policies and plans to achieve desired objectives. The USD(P) also is responsible for efforts to build and maintain defense relationships with U.S. allies, partners, competitors, and international organizations. As provided by 10 U.S.C. 134, the USD(P) assists the Secretary of Defense in the development of written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans, and for the review of such plans. Subject to the

authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, the USD(P) has responsibility for supervising and directing activities of the Department of Defense relating to export controls, as well as for policy oversight, guidance, allocation, and use of resources for Department of Defense security cooperation and combating terrorism activities.

*Question.* If confirmed, what additional duties and responsibilities do you expect that the Secretary of Defense would prescribe for you?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I expect the Secretary of Defense would have me serve as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy. In addition, I would establish good relationships with other DOD Components, Defense Agencies and DOD Field Activities, the Joint Staff, Military Services, and Combatant Commands. I would expect that the Secretary will assign me any other duties that he deemed appropriate for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, including, but not limited to, representing the Department of Defense, as directed, in matters involving the National Security Council (NSC), Department of State, and other Federal departments, agencies, and interagency groups with responsibility for national security policy.

*Question.* What background and experience do you possess that qualify you for this position?

*Answer.* I was trained as an international security and conflict specialist, with a PhD from Columbia University in political science. Over the past two decades, I have held professorships at the University of Minnesota, Georgetown University, and now Stanford University, where I am a tenured Senior Fellow and Co-Director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation. I have conducted research and published on a wide array of foreign policy and defense policy topics, including environmental security, the evolution of counterinsurgency, post-9/11 Middle East policy, nuclear nonproliferation, the impact of emerging technologies on strategic stability, the geopolitical implications of COVID-19, and American grand strategy. I also have extensive experience as a policy practitioner, working at multiple levels of government. From 2005 to 2006, I worked as an action officer at the Pentagon in OSD Policy via a fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations, focusing on stability and counterinsurgency operations. I returned to OSD Policy from 2009 to 2011 as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, serving as the senior policy advisor to the Secretary of Defense for Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel and the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, and six other countries in the Levant and Gulf region. For my work on these issues, I was awarded the Outstanding Public Service Medal by Secretary Gates in 2011. From October 2014 to January 2017, I served as Deputy Assistant to President Obama and National Security Advisor to Vice President Biden. As a senior aide to the President and Vice President, and a standing member of the National Security Council Deputies Committee, I worked extensively on China, Central America, Iran, the counter-ISIS campaign, North Korea, Russia, Ukraine, cyber, climate policy, and other national security matters.

*Question.* If confirmed, what duties and responsibilities would you assign to the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I expect that whomever is confirmed as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy would be my partner and right hand on all national security and defense policy matters, as we fulfill our roles as principal staff assistants and advisors to the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Defense. Regarding specifics, if I am confirmed, I will examine the roles and responsibilities in consultation with the Office of General Counsel, to ensure compliance with the law, and with the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to ensure a full, successful partnership.

*Question.* What are the major challenges you would expect to confront if confirmed as the USD(P)?

*Answer.* The most urgent challenge we face is the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. If confirmed, my first priority will be to support Secretary Austin's direction to the Department to support Federal COVID-19 response efforts. We also must root out extremism in the Department, which is contrary to the oath we take to support and defend the Constitution. Another major challenge is balancing efforts to prepare and strengthen the United States military for a dynamic future security landscape and ensuring deterrence against threats from China and other strategic competitors, rogue states and terrorist organizations; preparing for the effects of climate change that drive nation-state fragility and conflict; working to address transnational criminal organizations and irregular migration; and accounting for budgetary limitations. I would ensure, through the formulation of the

next National Defense Strategy, that the Department properly outlines the strategic and policy objectives that we expect the Joint Force to achieve.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would your policy priorities be, and what areas of policy do you think have not been adequately emphasized or addressed by the Department of Defense (DOD)?

*Answer.* If confirmed, my first priority will be to support Secretary Austin's efforts to combat COVID-19. We need to take care of our national security workforce to ensure they have the protections necessary to conduct their essential national security missions. I will take immediate steps to understand the organizational health and structure of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and take action to ensure the career civilian workforce is appropriately sized and resourced. I understand resource-driven civilian staff reductions have resulted in a significant decrease in staffing as well as marks against budget levels in Policy that threaten to undermine the ability of the workforce to meet mission requirements as they exercise statutory responsibilities to provide civilian guidance and oversight of the military. Policy has to be organized effectively to meet our statutory requirements, as well as to meet emerging mission requirements in areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other disruptive technologies, climate change, and energy policy. Simultaneously, I will focus on our work to shape the next National Defense Strategy to ensure it accounts for changes in the strategic environment and reflects the Secretary's and the President's priorities. If confirmed, I will work closely with other DOD Components and with the Congress to address these challenges and support Secretary Austin's priorities for the Department.

*Question.* How would you characterize your views regarding the appropriate posture of stationing of U.S. Armed Forces overseas and their use in overseas operations?

*Answer.* I have great respect for all of our forces, regardless of where they serve. Overseas military presence contributes to assuring allies and partners of U.S. defense commitments and shared values, and to ensuring our operational responsiveness. I believe having our forces serve in overseas locations is essential to our national security interests and to our ability to protect and defend the Homeland and interests around the world.

#### CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY

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

What is your view of the role of DOD civilian leadership, as compared to the role of the military, in the formulation of strategy and contingency planning?

*Answer.* Civilian control of the military is a vital cornerstone of our democracy. DOD civilian leadership provides necessary direction and oversight of the formulation of military strategy and plans through the provision of timely policy guidance, clearly defined objectives and end-states, and requirements and guidelines for contingency planning. Additionally, the Department's military leadership exercises essential roles across the range of DOD's strategic and planning functions, providing deep operational expertise and sound military advice; working closely with military leaders, therefore, is essential to success in these areas. Collectively, these roles ensure a balanced civil-military relationship and national defense activities that are in concert with American values.

*Question.* If confirmed, what specific steps would you take to implement the Commission's recommendation that "the Secretary of Defense and USD(P) . . . fully exercise their responsibilities for preparing guidance for and reviewing contingency plans?"

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will fully carry out the responsibilities of the USD(P) to prepare guidance for and review contingency plans. Specifically, I will deepen and expand the interactions between civilian and military leadership through an extensive contingency plans review process to invigorate the civilian oversight role, integrate new capabilities more effectively, and ensure robust civil-military dialogue.

Section 901 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2020 authorized an increase in the number of personnel in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and "sunsetting" the reduction of funding mandated in section 346 of the Fiscal Year 2016 NDAA. It does not appear that the Department has used these additional flexibilities to increase the number of civilian billets in OSD, however.

*Question.* In your view, would an increase in the number of personnel assigned to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (OUSD(P)) enhance civilian control of the military? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* I understand Policy's civilian workforce has shrunk by 25 percent as a result of mandatory headquarters cuts taken over the past decade; and the Fiscal Year 2021 DOD Appropriations Act explanatory statement's \$3.5 million reduction in operation and maintenance funds for Policy for "excess personnel increase" will affect the civilian workforce further. I am concerned about these cuts, and if confirmed will review Policy's missions and current staffing levels to determine whether the professional civilian staff is sized appropriately and whether it is able to recruit and retain an experienced, talented, diverse workforce that can effectively carry out the Secretary's vision for meaningful oversight of the military. If necessary, I will seek additional personnel to be assigned permanently to Policy so that we can effectively pursue these national security missions and improve civilian control of the military.

National Defense Strategy (NDS)

*Question.* Does the 2018 NDS accurately assess the current strategic environment, including the most critical and enduring threats to the national security of the United States and its allies? If confirmed, what changes or adjustments would you recommend in the NDS? What changes or adjustments would you recommend in the Department's implementation of the NDS?

*Answer.* I believe the 2018 NDS accurately identifies strategic competition with China and Russia as the primary challenge animating the global security environment. The continued erosion of United States military advantage vis-à-vis China and Russia, in key strategic areas, remains the most significant risk the Department must address. I assess China is the top priority and pacing threat for the Department, given its increasing scope and scale of military modernization, its aggressive behavior, and its potential as a systemic competitor across multiple domains.

The Department should consider geo-political shifts, intensifying competition with China, transnational threats (including climate change and COVID-19 and other biological threats), and the evolving technology landscape in its review and development of the next NDS. Further, the 2018 NDS assumed sustained defense budget growth and anticipated a rebalancing of United States commitments from the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific region, though neither has fully materialized. A new strategy should consider and highlight the difficult choices DOD faces, where fiscal, doctrinal, temporal, or other limitations pose trade-offs to addressing strategic priorities.

I understand DOD's annual NDS assessment identified the need for strategy implementation to involve more deliberate planning, organization, and prioritization. If confirmed, I will review and consider applying forward the insights from NDS implementation, while also helping to ensure that future strategy implementation is addressed more organically as part of the NDS development process.

DOD should consider how a number of factors affect NDS implementation, including the security and fiscal environments, demands on defense-wide and military roles and missions, global force management and force planning issues, and the state of our network of allies and partners. If confirmed, I would ensure future strategy implementation focuses on how DOD efforts can be better integrated with other elements of national power, and with key roles exercised by our allies and partners.

The National Defense Strategy Commission recommended an average of 3 to 5 percent real growth annually in the size of the defense budget in future years or "DOD should alter the expectations of the strategy and America's global strategic objectives."

*Question.* Do you believe that DOD requires 3 to 5 percent real budgetary growth through the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) to implement the NDS effectively? If confirmed, by what standards would you measure the adequacy of DOD funding?

*Answer.* The Department must align new operating concepts, focused capability investments, and internal reforms with its strategic approach to future warfighting, to be able to deter our competitors most effectively. The overall level of DOD resourcing is a critical factor that must be reconciled with national priorities for our military. Appropriate use of available DOD resources will be necessary to maximize the strategy's effectiveness and minimize risks to U.S. Forces, while at the same time DOD seeks efficiencies through innovation.

If confirmed, I would first ensure, through oversight of and participation in the formulation of the next National Defense Strategy, that the Department properly outlines the strategic and policy objectives that we expect the Joint Force to achieve. Secondly, by leveraging and supporting the Department's analytic enterprise, I

would ensure the Secretary and other senior leaders have a clear understanding of the warfighting effectiveness needed for our forces to be able to achieve those ends, with acceptable levels of risk. Based on this information, I would support the Secretary in clearly communicating risks and resourcing priorities to Congress.

#### GLOBAL FORCE POSTURE

*Question.* What is your assessment of the adequacy of the current U.S. global defense posture, particularly as it relates to stationing U.S. military forces overseas, and where would you look to increase or decrease U.S. force posture overseas given current international security dynamics?

*Answer.* DOD's current global posture provides the United States a good baseline for executing operations today. However, there are opportunities to improve DOD's global posture so that we are better positioned to execute operations tomorrow. With this in mind, DOD will be executing a global posture review directed by President Biden to assess alignment of DOD's posture with national security priorities. Most importantly, DOD will review how to take additional steps toward a more resilient and distributed posture in the Indo-Pacific region that leverages new capabilities and operational concepts. Elsewhere in the world, we need to ensure DOD forces and footprint are scoped appropriately for the threat scenarios they face and balanced against any tradeoffs with the strategic priority of improving our warfighting advantages over near-peer competitors.

*Question.* In your view, what role do forward-stationed forces play in implementing the NDS and what is the proper balance between forward-stationed, rotationally-deployed, and surge forces in executing our defense strategy?

*Answer.* Forward-stationed forces play a critical role in enabling DOD to deter potential adversaries because they decrease crisis response times while also reassuring, supporting, and developing stronger relationships with allies and partners. The balance between forward-stationed, rotationally deployed, and surge forces varies from region to region based upon several factors, including the capabilities required to deter particular threats and the availability of access and basing in allied and partner countries. However, each of the three components is vital to our overall global defense posture.

*Question.* Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to U.S. success in competition and conflict against a strategic power. If confirmed, what U.S. alliances and partnerships would you consider most critical and what new partnerships would you pursue in each Combatant Commander's area of responsibility?

*Answer.* Our alliances and partnerships are an asymmetric strategic advantage over our competitors. The strength of this network of defense relations cannot be taken for granted. We must reinvigorate and modernize these relationships, where appropriate. If confirmed, I would strive to align the Department's priorities and synchronize our tools and resources, to help allies and partners develop their defense establishments and military forces. I would confer within the Department to inform how best to enhance and strengthen defense relationships that advance shared objectives. I expect to focus on engaging with key allies and partners on priority bilateral and multilateral issues, strengthening collaborative planning, and increasing interoperability.

*Question.* In your view, in the event of a major conflict with a strategic competitor such as China or Russia, what component of DOD would be responsible for real time management of the resulting impacts and necessary adjustments to global force posture? Is that DOD component adequately resourced and structured to react at the speed of relevance?

*Answer.* The Secretary of Defense is responsible for activating a plan for a major conflict with a strategic competitor and subsequent global force posture adjustments and associated risk. To facilitate these decisions, the Joint Staff provides military options and the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy provides its recommendations to the Secretary regarding the associated risk to strategy and policy.

All DOD components, but particularly Policy—which directly supports and enables the Secretary's civilian control of the military—should be properly resourced to provide timely and informed advice. If confirmed, I will review whether OSD Policy is adequately resourced and structured to react swiftly and appropriately to a major conflict.

#### NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES AND NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW (NPR)

*Question.* Do you agree with Secretary Austin that nuclear deterrence is DOD's highest priority mission and that modernizing each leg of the nuclear triad and the Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear weapons complex is a critical national security priority?

**Answer.** As both Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks testified, I agree that nuclear deterrence is DOD's highest priority mission, and I agree that nuclear modernization of the triad is critical to U.S. national security.

**Question.** What is your understanding of how Russia and China have expanded and/or modernized their nuclear force capabilities?

**Answer.** I understand that Russia has largely completed modernization of its strategic forces and is pursuing new strategic-range nuclear systems. I am aware of reporting that Russia is poised to increase the size of its theater and tactical nuclear weapons arsenal in response to perceived threats; and of the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA), public statement that China will roughly double the size of its nuclear forces. If confirmed, I will request briefings on these developments to understand the details of both countries' modernization program, why they are modernizing, and the implications for U.S. national and international security.

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

**Answer.** Improvements to nuclear forces by our two most important strategic competitors of course pose a threat to the United States and its allies and partners. Maintaining effective nuclear deterrence is critical.

**Question.** Do you support the U.S. nuclear force structure changes recommended by the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review?

**Answer.** I expect the Administration will review the nuclear force changes recommended by the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review to determine if they are appropriate given the current and projected security and fiscal environment.

**Question.** The 2010 NPR called for retaining "sufficient force structure in each leg to allow the ability to hedge effectively by shifting weight from one Triad leg to another if necessary due to unexpected technological problems or operational vulnerabilities." Do you agree with that requirement for our nuclear force structure? Please explain your answer.

**Answer.** I agree—the three legs of the U.S. nuclear deterrent are complementary and mutually supporting capabilities. The Triad allows for flexibility in our nuclear deterrence and provides a built-in hedge to increase resiliency against unknown technological surprise or unpredicted advancements in threat capabilities.

**Question.** The 2010 and 2018 NPRs concluded that the United States would maintain a substantial portion of its nuclear forces on continuous alert, including keeping nearly all ICBMs on alert, and maintaining a significant number of SSBNs at sea at any given time. Do you agree with that conclusion? Please explain your answer.

**Answer.** Maintaining a portion of U.S. nuclear forces on day-to-day alert maximizes decision time and preserves the range of U.S. response options. It enhances deterrence by denying potential adversaries the capability to destroy our nuclear deterrent forces in a surprise first strike. I would expect the appropriate alert levels would be reviewed in the course of any posture review.

**Question.** In response to conditions set forth in the Senate Resolution of Ratification of the New START Treaty, President Obama certified on February 2, 2011, that he intended to "(a) modernize or replace the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems: a heavy bomber and air-launched cruise missile, an ICBM, and a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and SLBM; and (b) maintain the United States rocket motor industrial base." Do you agree with and support these objectives for modernizing the triad of strategic nuclear delivery systems? Please explain your answer.

**Answer.** The nuclear Triad has provided a strong deterrence posture for decades. The U.S. nuclear deterrent plays a significant role in global strategic stability and we must maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear force to maintain that stability. If confirmed, I will conduct a review to determine the appropriate pace and scale of modernization to support future stability requirements.

**Question.** Is the current program of record sufficient to support full modernization of the nuclear triad, including delivery systems, warheads, while supporting National Nuclear Security Administration infrastructure?

**Answer.** I believe it is intended to be. I anticipate the Department of Defense, in partnership with the Department of Energy, will review these programs to ensure we are modernizing our forces and supporting infrastructure in an effective, affordable, and sustainable manner that provides us the necessary capabilities when they are needed.

**Question.** Admiral Richard, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command, recently reaffirmed the longstanding assessment of the Department of Defense that extending the service life of the Minuteman III (MM III) system is no longer a cost-effective option for preserving the nation's intercontinental ballistic missile force, and given MM III's age, is all but technologically infeasible. Do you agree with the Commander's assessment?



*Answer.* I agree we cannot life-extend Cold War legacy forces indefinitely, and I look forward, if confirmed, to working with the Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, as the Administration conducts a review of our nuclear modernization efforts in support of the nuclear posture review. If confirmed, I will work within the Administration to begin reviewing our nuclear policy and programs to ensure we are modernizing our forces in an effective and affordable manner.

*Question.* The Long Range Stand Off Weapon (LRSO) is intended to replace the AGM-86B Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM)— Do you support the Long Range Stand-Off weapon as a replacement for the aging ALCM?

*Answer.* I support modernizing our aging nuclear forces and maintaining a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. I understand the need to modernize and replace the ALCM. If confirmed, I plan to prioritize getting briefed on all our nuclear modernization plans.

*Question.* If confirmed as USD(P), would you take steps to advocate for, and ensure the continued development of, the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent and Long Range Stand-Off programs? If so, what are those steps?

*Answer.* I support modernizing our aging nuclear forces and believe we must maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent. If confirmed, I plan to prioritize getting briefed on all of our nuclear modernization plans, which will include a careful review of the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent and Long Range Stand-Off Programs.

If confirmed, I will request briefings on all our nuclear modernization plans to ensure we prioritize and maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal.

*Question.* Do you believe a nuclear “No First Use” policy would be appropriate for the United States? Please explain your answer, including the implications of such a policy for the U.S. extended deterrence commitments to our allies.

*Answer.* I believe the United States should periodically examine its nuclear declaratory policy to ensure it is suitable for the current and foreseeable security environment and supports U.S. strategic objectives. Our declaratory policy should support our strategic deterrence and be credible in the eyes of both adversaries and allies. As such, I would expect to consult closely with allies in the course of reexamining our nuclear policy.

*Question.* By statute, the USD(P) is a member of the Nuclear Weapons Council. In your view, what are the most significant issues the Council should take up in the coming years?

*Answer.* The most significant issues facing the Nuclear Weapons Council are maintaining our commitment to nuclear modernization to ensure that the United States has a credible, flexible, and responsive nuclear deterrent and to recapitalize our aging infrastructure to be able to respond quickly to an emerging threat environment.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you participate in Nuclear Weapons Council matters?

*Answer.* If confirmed, as one of six principal members of the Nuclear Weapons Council, I will work to ensure that the nation’s nuclear policies are integral to decisions concerning the current and future nuclear stockpile and the recapitalization of the supporting infrastructure.

*Question.* Do you support the continuation of the W93 program and parallel efforts to collaborate with the United Kingdom in the maintenance of its independent nuclear deterrent?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I anticipate an early review of our nuclear weapons programs. Any impacts on the United Kingdom would be a consideration in that review. The United Kingdom’s independent strategic nuclear forces contribute significantly to the overall security of the NATO Alliance, and our close partnership with the UK remains a critical facet of United States national security.

*Question.* Based on your understanding of the condition of the nation’s nuclear command, control and communications system, do you believe the modernization of the system should be a high priority, and, if so, what actions would you take to advocate such steps, if confirmed?

*Answer.* Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) system effectiveness is an essential element of deterrence and crisis stability. If confirmed, I would use Policy’s chair in DOD governing and budget processes to advocate for prioritizing the modernization of the NC3 system, which underpins our nuclear deterrence capabilities.

*Question.* During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Austin voiced his agreement that any future reductions in U.S. nuclear forces should be taken only within the context of a formal, verifiable arms control agreements with adversaries, rather than by unilateral actions. Do you agree with Secretary Austin’s views?

*Answer.* Yes, I agree with Secretary Austin.

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

*Answer.* With the New START Treaty extension secured, if confirmed, I anticipate a review of our arms control objectives and approach. The pace and scale of our modernization plans would be an important consideration in such a review. Maintaining credible and effective nuclear forces and pursuing verifiable reductions both contribute to strategic stability.

*Question.* In your view, at what threshold condition should future nuclear arms control regimes be expanded to include China's arsenal, as well as those of the United States and Russia?

*Answer.* Although China is actively modernizing and appears to be significantly increasing the size of its nuclear forces, their inventory remains much smaller than those of the United States and Russia. That said, the reasons China is expanding its nuclear forces, and the implications for strategic and regional stability should be addressed. For that reason, as we focus on engaging Russia on further arms control negotiations, it is important to bring China into either United States-Russian structures or into parallel arms control and security discussions.

*Question.* Do you believe that the United States should consider accepting limitations on its missile defense, cyber, or conventional power projection capabilities as part of an agreement with Russia or China on nuclear weapons' reductions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would support a review of missile defense policy and capabilities to ensure the Department's policy and strategy are fully aligned with the priorities of the Administration. I agree we should be careful not to impede our ability to defend ourselves against missile threats or attacks originating from rogue states. In coordination with the Department of State, I would ensure DOD views inform any future nuclear arms control negotiations with either Russia or China.

#### MISSILE DEFENSE

*Question.* What component of the OUSD(P) is responsible for Theater Integrated Air and Missile Defense in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, and in your view, what should be done to improve the protection of deployed United States and allied forces from growing missile threats in operational theaters, particularly from advanced cruise and hypersonic missiles?

*Answer.* From a broad policy perspective, Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) plays an important role in deterring and mitigating adversary anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. I understand that multiple offices within OUSD(P) address different aspects of regional IAMD. These include defense relationships with allies and partners, agreements, future capability development, and contingency planning, among others. The relevant offices within OUSD(P) work closely with many stakeholders, including the Joint Staff as well as Geographic Combatant Commands—especially United States Indo-Pacific Command, United States Central Command, and United States European Command—on policy aspects related to theater-specific operational plans designed to contend against advanced threats such as cruise and hypersonic missiles.

The Air Force announced in December 2020 a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking potential contractors to operate, maintain and integrate sensors, kinetic weapons, directed energy systems, and emerging technologies for the Air Base Air Defense program. The program would protect multiple air bases in the European and Africa Command areas of responsibility through a potential \$953 Million contract.

*Question.* Do you agree that this effort is necessary to protect key bases required to deter, and if necessary, defeat Russia in Europe?

*Answer.* Although I am not aware of the details of that program, my understanding is that air base defense and resiliency are critical areas in need of capability investment and modernization, both for the Air Force and the Army, given the Army's designated role in integrated air and missile defense. Protecting air bases is key to ensuring the Air Force can generate and sustain combat power in support of broader joint force operations in the air, on the ground, and at sea.

*Question.* Should there be a parallel effort in the Indo-Pacific?

*Answer.* My understanding is that air base defense and resiliency are critical priorities in the Indo-Pacific region as well. I cannot speak to the specific merits of the Air Base Air Defense program. However, the Department must properly address air and missile threats to U.S. Forces and bases in the Indo-Pacific theater in order to deter aggression credibly and reassure allies and partners.

*Question.* If confirmed as USD(P), what would be your priorities for U.S. missile defense capabilities for the Homeland?

*Answer.* The United States is currently defended from existing intercontinental missile threats posed by rogue States by the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system, which includes 44 ground-based interceptors and a global network of sensors and command and control elements. If confirmed, I would support continuing improvements to these components of our Homeland missile defense architecture to address evolving rogue State missile threats. We must have an effective missile defense that defends the United States and its allies and partners.

*Question.* Do you support the current plan for modernizing the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GBMD) system, which anticipates the deployment of a Next Generation Interceptor in about a decade?

*Answer.* Defense of the United States against rogue state threats is a DOD priority, and missile defense is a central component of this mission. If confirmed, I would support continuing improvements to our missile defense architecture. I would review missile defense concepts, programs, and capabilities in light of the Administration's broader defense strategy. I agree that we should prioritize an effective system to improve our limited missile defense capability against rogue States, and we should minimize the risks of delay or cost growth.

*Question.* In your view, what should we be doing to improve protection of the Homeland from North Korean ballistic missiles in the interim?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work to develop effective and affordable solutions responsive to evolving missile threats to the U.S. Homeland, including our ongoing modernization efforts to improve the current deployed Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system. I will need to review particular concepts, programs, and capabilities to be able to advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on specific courses of action to improve the protection of the Homeland.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the importance of a space-based sensor capability to support both regional and Homeland missile defense scenarios?

*Answer.* Space-based sensors are a vital component of missile defense, enabling a variety of capabilities such as detection, tracking, and targeting through all phases of flight for an incoming missile. In addition, space-based sensors provide hit and kill assessments of engagements. Space-based sensors are key for maintaining persistent coverage against a range of threats, including advanced threats such as hypersonic missiles.

*Question.* Do you support the policy—reiterated by the 2019 Missile Defense Review—that the United States should continue to rely on nuclear deterrence to defend against large-scale missile attack from Russia and China?

*Answer.* I support longstanding United States policy to rely on nuclear deterrence to safeguard the United States against large-scale strategic missile threats from Russia and China.

*Question.* In your view, what is the relationship between missile defense and nuclear deterrence?

*Answer.* The relationship between U.S. missile defense and the U.S. nuclear arsenal is complementary—both capabilities are essential to deterring an attack against the United States. U.S. nuclear weapons present a credible threat of response to a nuclear attack or threat of attack, while United States missile defenses provide deterrence and, if necessary, damage limitation against a limited nuclear attack by a rogue state such as North Korea. Extended deterrence provides assurance to our allies and partners who are also critical to contributing to nonproliferation goals, and strengthening regional and global security.

#### SPACE

*Question.* The 2020 Defense Space Strategy highlighted that China and Russia are training and equipping their military space forces and fielding new anti-satellite weapons to hold United States and allied space operations and activities at risk, even as they push for international agreements on the non-weaponization of space.

*Answer.* In your view, does the 2018 NDS accurately assess the strategic environment as it pertains to the domain of space?

The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) accurately provides a broad overview of the strategic environment as it pertains to the space domain. The NDS highlights the growing threats to our national security interests arising from strategic competition with China and Russia, as well as the importance of working with our allies and partners. The 2020 Defense Space Strategy provides additional detail on the growing space and counterspace threats posed by China and Russia, as well as the growth of allied, partner, and commercial space capabilities.

*Question.* How would you assess current DOD readiness to implement the 2018 NDS as it relates to the domain of space and the 2020 Defense Space Strategy?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would seek to assess current DOD readiness to implement the 2018 National Defense Strategy as it relates to space and the 2020 Defense Space Strategy. I would first determine the state of readiness of our personnel and the resilience of our space-based systems to address current and anticipated challenges. I would work across the Department, including with the U.S. Space Command and the U.S. Space Force, to ensure the readiness and resilience of our forces across all domains in order to protect and secure our Homeland and U.S. interests.

*Question.* What do you perceive as the most significant threats to U.S. national security space satellites?

*Answer.* Growing Chinese and Russian counterspace activities present the most significant threats to United States national security space satellites, as well as to allied and partner space activities. Both China and Russia view space as critical to modern warfare and see United States reliance on space as a vulnerability to target. They view the use of counterspace capabilities as a means to reduce U.S. military effectiveness and to win future wars. Iran and North Korea also have demonstrated some counterspace capabilities that threaten, to a lesser extent than those of China and Russia, United States, allied, and partner space satellites.

*Question.* What do you perceive as the most significant threats to commercial space systems owned by U.S. companies? What are the Department's responsibilities in defense of U.S. commercial assets in space? If confirmed, would you support the development of offensive and defensive space control capabilities to counter threats against such assets?

*Answer.* I do not expect adversaries to discriminate in peacetime or in the event of conflict between military and commercial satellites that support the military. Chinese and Russian counterspace capabilities are the most significant threats to both national security and United States commercial space systems.

DOD responsibilities to defend commercial capabilities would be a function of the particular circumstances and the law. If confirmed, I would seek to understand the extent to which DOD has the capacity and the authority to defend U.S. commercial assets in space, and the situations in which DOD might be called upon to defend commercial capabilities.

Yes. Other nations are developing space and counterspace capabilities that are contesting the ability of the United States and our allies and partners to operate freely in the domain. The development of both offensive and defensive space capabilities is needed for an effective U.S. strategy to deter and counter hostile use of space, and to provide freedom of operation in, from, and to the space domain.

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

*Question.* Do you believe that the creation of the Space Force and SPACECOM was warranted? If so, do you recommend changes in the structure, authorities, and missions of these organizations?

*Answer.* Yes. The creation of the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command was supported by recommendations from numerous independent commissions and studies over a number of years and across multiple Congresses and Administrations. These commissions and studies examined the expanding challenges in the space domain, how to address them, and how to adapt our defense space enterprise and grow our capacity to secure the Nation's vital interests in space. I understand this work led to the bipartisan support for creating the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command.

If confirmed, I would assess whether changes to the structure, authorities, and missions of the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command are necessary to advance national security. I would work to enhance the integration of the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command with other Military Services and Combatant Commands, and with other stakeholders within the Department. The integration of space within the national security enterprise would be an important focus area.

*Question.* Do you believe other services should maintain organic space capability or should those capabilities transfer to Space Force?

*Answer.* I understand that with the establishment of the U.S. Space Force, the majority of DOD space capabilities were transferred to the new Military Service. However, I also understand that some organic space capabilities remained with the other Military Services to support their designated functions and forces. If confirmed, I would review the current state of the defense space enterprise and assess if there is a need to move any additional capabilities to advance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Joint Force in addressing growing security challenges in space.

*Question.* Do you believe the Dept of the Air Force is adequately funded to handle both Space Force and Air Force or should there be a TOA increase—if so, where should that come from and how should “pass through” be handled?

*Answer.* As part of strengthening U.S. military advantages, it is critical to resource key space capabilities in the face of growing threats, particularly to ensure U.S. use of space and to have the ability to deny hostile uses of space by competitors and potential adversaries whose forces are increasingly enabled from space. Though I am not currently privy to the budget details, if confirmed, I would ensure Policy exercises its important role in support of overseeing the budget process and the development of Secretary-level guidance that helps ensure the Military Services’ appropriate resourcing levels for capability development in space and other domains.

*Question.* In your view, how could the U.S. Space Force and SPACECOM exploit commercial and small launch options to allow for more rapid replenishment and on-orbit employment of vital warfighting systems, while minimizing risk of mission failure?

*Answer.* The Department of Defense utilizes commercial space launch systems in situations where there is a match to mission requirements. Responsive launch, which is a small subset of the entire responsive space architecture, can enhance threat deterrence against potential adversaries and promote space mission assurance. I understand that the Department is in the process of developing tactically responsive launch requirements that could further capitalize on commercial innovation. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command to identify how to utilize commercial technology in launch and other space applications most effectively to meet warfighting and mission assurance requirements.

Space systems, like other military systems, rely on the availability of sufficient frequency spectrum that is becoming scarce.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you work with the Military Departments and Services, the Joint Staff, and other components of DOD to ensure that the Department’s frequency spectrum requirements are accounted for and protected in interagency discussions about potential spectrum auctions?

*Answer.* The modern electromagnetic environment is increasingly congested, contested, and constrained. Adversary actions, commercial development, and regulatory constraints impede U.S. forces’ freedom of action in the electromagnetic spectrum. Ensuring that freedom of action will require policies that balance important U.S. economic development objectives, while preserving military capabilities and limiting constraints on the use of those capabilities. If confirmed, I would work alongside DOD’s Chief Information Officer to ensure DOD’s access to critical spectrum, including by strengthening our commercial, interagency, and international partnerships to promote interoperability and spectrum access policies that support the U.S. military in conducting its full range of global operations.

The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2020 not only created a new Military Service dedicated to the space domain, but also created an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy to serve as the senior civilian official in the Office of the Secretary of Defense charged with oversight of military and interagency space policy and operations.

*Question.* Do you believe such a position is needed? If so, and if confirmed, what steps would you take to fill this position immediately and what qualifications would you require of a nominee?

*Answer.* Yes. I understand the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy is responsible for providing expertise and capacity to support the Secretary of Defense in setting defense strategy and policy for the space domain and in carrying out other civilian oversight functions with respect to both the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command. Additionally, as a direct report to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, this official has important responsibilities in leading the Department’s international space cooperation activities with allies and partners and in supporting the Department of State’s diplomatic efforts regarding space security.

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would advise the Secretary of Defense that he work with the President to select a nominee the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, who has leadership experience in developing and executing national defense policy and strategy, who understands space systems and the interrelationships between space operations and total force operations, and who has demonstrated success in developing international partnerships with our allies and partners. I would ask the acting leadership for a briefing on what actions have been taken to establish and organize the ASD for Space Policy office and ask for their assessment regarding the appropriate resourcing and scope of responsibilities for that office regarding space, space-related, and other advanced technology missions, taking into account the overall structure of the Policy organization.

## CYBER POLICY AND AUTHORITIES

*Question.* The September 2018 DOD Cyber Strategy charges DOD to “defend forward, shape the day-to-day competition, and prepare for war” to compete, deter, and win in the cyber domain. The NDAA for fiscal year explicitly provided that military operations in cyberspace may be conducted as traditional military activities as defined in the covert action statute. In addition, NSPM-13 streamlined the inter-agency process for reviewing and approving military cyber effects operations. These changes have led to increased operations by U.S. Cyber Command, including operations to defend the United States from interference in the 2018 and 2020 elections.

*Answer.* Do you believe that the DOD Cyber Strategy, congressional affirmation of traditional military operations in cyberspace, and current approval and oversight processes for cyber effects operations are appropriate and should be sustained, or if confirmed, would you recommend they be altered? Please explain your answer.

It is my understanding that these policy measures have resulted in well-coordinated, risk-managed, and timely DOD cyber operations. If I am confirmed, I intend to review these measures, and I will confirm that oversight is adequate and that the Department remains fully transparent with Congress as we ensure that DOD is able to perform its mission effectively in cyberspace.

The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021 established the position of National Cyber Director to improve coordination and integration across the government in developing cyberspace strategy, policy, plans, and resource allocation.

*Question.* How do you envision DOD supporting the National Cyber Director?

*Answer.* Cyber is inherently a team sport, and I welcome all efforts to ensure that our Nation’s networks and infrastructure are resilient and secure. I look forward to working within the Administration in implementing this initiative.

*Question.* How do you plan to work with the DOD Principal Cyber Advisor and the Military Service Principal Cyber Advisors in the coordination of cyber policy and the many cyber initiatives across the DOD?

The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is responsible for developing and overseeing implementation of DOD’s strategy and policy. The Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA) plays an important role in providing independent advice to the SecDef on cyber policy, programs, plans, and budgeting as well as in managing the implementation of the DOD Cyber Strategy, thus executing a largely internally facing function in assessing and coordinating DOD plans, programs, and functions.

I understand the important role that the PCA plays across the Department and in overseeing the implementation of the DOD Cyber Strategy. That the PCA is dual-hatted as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security is important, because it ensures close collaboration between those in Policy responsible for drafting the DOD Cyber Strategy and those responsible for overseeing its implementation. If confirmed as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, I would work closely with him or her to develop and implement a practicable cyber strategy, provide effective oversight of U.S. Cyber Command, and ensure that the Department’s externally facing functions and policy are compatible with its internal plans and programs.

Recent cyber notifications from the Department for sensitive cyber military operations, as required by law, have become increasingly vague and do not provide enough information for the committee to perform adequate oversight of these operations.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do to improve these cyber operations notifications?

*Answer.* I understand that the Department, in accordance with Section 395 of Title 10, U.S. Code, notifies the congressional defense committees within 48 hours of completing sensitive military cyber operations. If confirmed, I will work with DOD components to improve these notifications by providing as much additional information as possible when appropriate.

*Question.* Are there steps other than improving the written notifications that you would take, if confirmed, to help Congress perform oversight of these critical operations?

*Answer.* I am committed to the principle of congressional oversight and, if confirmed, I would work with the Department to deliver informative and timely quarterly cyber operations briefings (as required by Section 484 of Title 10, U.S. Code) and the annual military cyberspace operations reports (as required by Section 1644 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020) so that Congress has the information needed to oversee military cyber operations effectively.

## COOPERATIVE THREAT REDUCTION (CTR) PROGRAM

*Question.* The CTR Program is widening its aperture to include biological weapons and capabilities as well as biological surveillance and early warning, and encouraging the development of capabilities to reduce proliferation threats.

Do you support these DOD activities under the CTR program generally?

*Answer.* I am supportive of the Department of Defense's activities under the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program. I understand that the program has delivered significant benefits for U.S. security since the early 1990s. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the program's efficacy and clear prioritization to address threat reduction objectives, consistent with national and Departmental strategy.

*Question.* Do you believe the shift in focus to biological programs is an effective use of CTR resources? Why or why not?

*Answer.* I understand DOD has a process to assess WMD threats worldwide and prioritize CTR investments accordingly. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this process and ensuring CTR resources are aligned with DOD and interagency priorities and coordinated with our allies and partners.

## PANDEMIC RESPONSE

*Question.* Based on the Ebola outbreak in Liberia and the current COVID-19 outbreak around the world, what attributes do you believe the Department of Defense can bring to bear to fight a global pandemic here and abroad? Please be specific.

*Answer.* It is my understanding that DOD capabilities to support the response to public health crises include providing transportation and logistics; bio-surveillance with associated training; medical countermeasures, such as personnel protective equipment (PPE), therapeutics, and vaccines; laboratory support, such as diagnostics and genetic sequencing; sample-collection training; virtual training of healthcare workers to identify symptoms; and training of healthcare workers in the proper use of PPE. In the United States, the Department is responding to requests from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by providing support to FEMA- and State-run vaccination centers and by providing medical expertise to areas in need, and DOD is participating fully in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)-DOD Task Force. If confirmed, I commit to supporting Secretary Austin in his efforts to fight COVID-19 here and abroad.

## CHINA

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

*Answer.* A more resilient and distributed force posture in the Indo-Pacific region is essential to the U.S. military's ability to deter and, if necessary, deny adversary aggression against ourselves, allies, and partners. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the Military Departments and Services, and other U.S. departments and agencies to ensure that our Indo-Pacific region posture is optimized to deter aggression, reassure allies and partners, and prevail in conflict.

*Question.* In your view, is the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI), established and authorized at \$2.2 billion in the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA, a useful tool to improve U.S. posture in the Indo-Pacific?

*Answer.* The Pacific Deterrence Initiative can be a powerful tool to highlight and track the substantial investments that the Department of Defense is making to maintain a credible conventional deterrent in the Indo-Pacific region. These investments include more lethal and survivable capabilities; a more resilient and distributed force posture; improved capabilities for allies and partners; and enhanced innovation, experimentation, and training for the joint force.

*Question.* In your assessment, what are the priority investments DOD could make that would implement the NDS and enable a more favorable balance of military power in the Indo-Pacific?

*Answer.* The development of Joint and Service operational concepts help identify needed capability and capacity investments. If confirmed, I pledge to examine the Department's work in this area, including the development of capabilities such as long range fires, integrated fires networks, more robust space and cyber capabilities, and power projection in highly contested environments.

*Question.* What are your views on potentially increasing the number of forces west of the International Date Line and the balance of increased risk to the force against the need for more forward stationed troops?

*Answer.* A combat-credible forward posture is essential to the U.S. military's ability to deter and, if necessary, deny adversary aggression. However, distributed and resilient forward posture must be combined with new warfighting concepts; modern-

ized, highly capable, and ready forces; and capable allied and partner forces in order to fulfill their strategic role.

*Question.* In your view, how should U.S. operational concepts, force posture, and investments adapt to counter the shifting maritime balance in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. The development of joint operational concepts should help identify gaps or shortfalls in force design and posture, which then drive investment recommendations to counter the operational challenges posed by our most capable adversaries. If confirmed, I will review the Department's concept development work to ensure it fully considers where changes in force posture and investments may be necessary.

*Question.* Do you think the Department needs a Joint Operational Concept, that is—a theory of victory for a specific threat in a specific geographic region in a specific timeframe—for the Indo-Pacific, and if so, what should the Department be doing to develop that Operational Concept?

Answer. Yes, a joint operational concept, and likely supporting concepts, are important to describe how the future force may be employed during a conflict, and to inform future force development priorities. Given strategic competitors' increased military capability and stated military objectives, joint concept development should initially focus on defeating aggression in the Indo-Pacific region, and should be underpinned by analysis of specific operational problems. If confirmed, working closely with other Departmental components, I will ensure that joint operational concepts align with a theory of victory for achieving strategic and political objectives in a potential war in the Indo-Pacific theater, to ensure that the Department can more effectively link strategic ends, ways, and means for priority, future armed conflicts.

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

Answer. China seeks a more robust overseas logistics and basing infrastructure to allow the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to project and sustain military power at greater distances. Beyond its current base in Djibouti, China is likely considering additional overseas military logistics facilities to support naval, air, and ground forces. Locations likely considered for PLA military logistics facilities include Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, and Tajikistan. PLA personnel at the facility in Djibouti have interfered with United States flights by lasing pilots and flying drones, and the PRC has sought to restrict Djiboutian sovereign airspace over the base. These actions highlight that a global PLA military logistics network could interfere with United States and ally and partner military operations and eventually support offensive operations by China.

*Question.* What non-military activities and resources do you believe are necessary to effectively address the challenge posed by China? Do you believe these current activities are sufficient?

Answer. Secretary Austin has identified challenges posed by China as the Department's pacing challenge in most areas. The Department of Defense has an important role in meeting these challenges, but it cannot do so alone. I believe that the United States must use all elements of its national power, including the full range of diplomatic, economic, and intelligence efforts, as well as activities conducted by other departments and agencies, to address the complex challenges posed by China. Non-military activities and resources are vital to maintaining peace and deterring aggression, strengthening our alliances and partnerships, promoting prosperity for the American people, and advancing United States national interests in the Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere. If confirmed, I will work in close coordination with other departments and agencies to help ensure DOD's efforts to address the challenges posed by China are conducted within a whole-of-government approach.

Answer. I do not believe that the United States is sufficiently leveraging all of the non-military instruments of national power within a unified and integrated approach to address the challenges posed by China. It is vital that non-DOD departments and agencies have robust capabilities and sufficient resources to address the complex, and growing, non-military challenges posed by China and other actors. Additionally, closer alignment of DOD activities with interagency efforts can enhance our engagements with allies and partners and improve outcomes for the United States. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that DOD conducts its activities in close coordination with other departments and agencies, and will advocate for other departments and agencies to receive the resources necessary while improving return on investment for DOD initiatives to address the challenges our nation faces.

*Question.* Do you support the Defense Posture Realignment Initiative (DPRI), including the realignment of some United States Marines from Okinawa to Guam and



the build-up of facilities at other locations, such as Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan?

Answer. I support the continued implementation of the realignment plan known as the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI), as it is the bilaterally determined way forward. The realignment of Marine Corps forces on Okinawa and the main islands of Japan, including the establishment of a strong presence on the United States territory of Guam, is fundamental to the Department's effort to achieve an improved Indo-Pacific defense posture, contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will ensure the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy remains regularly engaged with United States Indo-Pacific Command, the Military Departments and Services, and the Department of State to adapt proactively and adjust U.S. access and joint presence to the realities of great power competition, and to ensure our posture is optimized for deterrence of adversaries, ally and partner assurance, and warfighting, if necessary.

*Question.* The United States has sought to clarify and strengthen its policy with respect to China's maritime claims in the South China Sea. What new steps would you recommend the United States put in place, both unilaterally and in coordination with allies and partners, to counter the increasing challenge posed by China in the South China Sea and Southeast Asia more broadly?

Answer. If confirmed, I would work with my interagency colleagues, and with United States allies and partners, to respond to China's coercive and destabilizing behavior in the South China Sea and to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Our approach should be based on maintaining a strong and stabilizing military presence in the region, to deter aggression and coercion and to reassure our allies and partners. In addition, I would look at ways to use security cooperation more effectively to build partner capacity and reduce vulnerability and coercion. Lastly, I would support a whole-of-government effort that includes renewed focus on cooperation with our Indo-Pacific region allies and partners, including combined military exercises and operations, expanded economic engagement, and reinvigorated diplomacy.

*Question.* What are the United States' responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act? What policy recommendations do you have regarding United States support to Taiwan?

Answer. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) sets forth United States policy on Taiwan and establishes our unofficial relationship. The TRA also makes clear that the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is a United States interest and a matter of international concern. In order to ensure the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, it is our responsibility to assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability. We do so through the regular provision of defense articles and services to Taiwan. The Department is also responsible for maintaining the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force, or other forms of coercion, that would jeopardize Taiwan. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting the Department in its implementation of U.S. policy, in accordance with the TRA.

For more than 40 years, our policy has been premised on China's continued commitment to the peaceful resolution of differences. China's military modernization, alongside the coercive and aggressive military actions in the vicinity of Taiwan, presents an increasingly urgent challenge to our interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, our support for Taiwan must be strong, principled, and bipartisan—in line with longstanding United States commitments to the the Taiwan Relations Act, Three Communiques, and the Six Assurances.

*Question.* What kinds of capabilities do you think should be priorities for Taiwan to acquire to best deter and, if necessary, defend against Chinese aggression?

Answer. Taiwan should prioritize asymmetric capabilities that are mobile, stealthy, survivable, and leverage Taiwan's geography to deter and defend against aggression from the People's Republic of China. This includes coastal defense cruise missiles, short- and medium-range air defense, sea mines, Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) platforms, and other asymmetric systems that build Taiwan's resilience and enable Taiwan to pose a credible deterrent to invading People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces. Taiwan must also prioritize the development and implementation of joint doctrine, service interoperability, and realistic training for the Taiwan Armed Forces. This includes developing a professional non-commissioned officer corps and increasing Taiwan's overall readiness. DOD should prioritize and be prepared to support these efforts.

*Question.* Considering the NDS and China's crackdown on Hong Kong, how do you view the United States relationship with Taiwan in the context of broader United States objectives in the Indo-Pacific?

Answer. Taiwan is an important partner to the United States and a contributor to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Taiwan is now the United States' 9th largest trading partner. With a population of 23 million, Taiwan is a shining example of a robust, prosperous, free, and orderly democratic society based on principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights. The common bonds and shared values of the United States-Taiwan relationship are real, and the benefit to the region is clear. The United States has played a role in Taiwan's success, and the "unofficial relationship" continues to advance regional peace and prosperity. A secure and confident Taiwan is better able to engage the People's Republic of China constructively, which supports everyone's interest in cross-Strait peace and stability.

In cyberspace, China has far greater capabilities than its regional neighbors, who may seek to work with the United States to improve their security.

*Question.* What are your views on the potential benefits of the United States offering cyberspace security assistance in the region?

Answer. Our community of allies and partners is one of the United States' greatest comparative advantages and a crucial component of our security. The security and resilience of their networks—especially those upon which U.S. forces rely, both in peacetime and in crisis—should be a key objective for U.S. strategy in cyberspace. If confirmed, I look forward to working to ensure that cyberspace security assistance has the focus and resources to be successful.

*Question.* In your view, should the United States respond in kind in the event that China executes destructive cyber attacks on United States critical infrastructure, and should the United States make that clear as a component of a declaratory deterrence policy?

Answer. Consistent with President Biden's statements on the topic, there must be consequences when norms of responsible state behavior are violated—and destructive attacks on critical infrastructure would be a particularly grave example of such violations. Determining how to respond to any given cyber attack, particularly ones considered destructive, would require case-by-case, fact-specific deliberation. I understand that to include a consideration of an incident's effects in their totality—and those effects could include injury, death, or significant property destruction. Any potential response to such a destructive incident would not be limited to the cyberspace domain. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department is postured to support whole-of-government responses to any such incidents, particularly if they are destructive or target our critical infrastructure. Effective deterrence requires this credible commitment, in coordination with our allies and partners, to respond effectively to perpetrators of such irresponsible activity.

*Question.* What is your view of China's pursuit of anti-satellite capabilities and what do you see as the long-term implications of such developments for the U.S. military, for U.S. national security, and for U.S. interests in space?

Answer. China's pursuit of anti-satellite capabilities is a central element in China's strategy of achieving information dominance in the electromagnetic spectrum and denying the spectrum's use to China's adversaries; this would enable China to seize and maintain strategic initiative in a military conflict. China's strategy underscores the importance of a United States space posture that achieves mission assurance commensurate with our reliance on capabilities delivered from space. Given the enduring importance of space for the United States—not just in the military and national security realms, but in all aspects of modern life—we must continue to transition to space architectures that have resilience against emerging and future threats, and we must also be prepared to protect, defend, and reconstitute our critical space capabilities.

*Question.* To what extent do you believe multilateral engagement is important for addressing the challenges posed by China? In your view, what are the most important multilateral relationships in the region and where are the opportunities to improve multilateral coordination?

Answer. Multilateral engagements are a critical part of our strategy to address the diverse and increasing set of challenges posed by China. These engagements, especially among likeminded partners, amplifies our voices, helps to pool resources, and establishes and enforces rules, norms, and standards. We have long recognized that our allies and partners are a key advantage against China's coercion and subversion of the international rules-based order. Only by continuing to strengthen our global relationships and work through multilateral formats will we ensure our collective ability to deter aggression and meet shared challenges.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defense Minister's Meeting Plus (ADMM+) is the primary forum through which the Department coordinates multilaterally and fosters cooperation. Beyond our efforts with ASEAN we also work multilaterally with many of our allies and partners to enhance coordination, interoperability, and responsiveness. Quadrilateral dialogue with Australia, India, and

Japan is emerging as another important mechanism to advance shared interests, including in support of ASEAN centrality. We will also continue to work trilaterally with Australia and Japan and trilaterally with the Republic of Korea and Japan. If confirmed, I would continue the Department's work to improve coordination with allies and partners multilaterally by broadening the scope of issues we discuss, as well as by considering new and expanded multilateral groupings.

#### NORTH KOREA

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

*Answer.* The security and stability of the Korean Peninsula is inextricably tied to regional security and stability. The United States remains well-postured to deal with the security threat posed by North Korea's continuing development of nuclear and conventional weapons. Our web of allies and partners in the region gives us a significant advantage as compared to our adversaries. In particular, our relationships with the Republic of Korea and Japan provide a powerful deterrent to North Korean threats. If confirmed, I will look to ensure that United States forces have what they need to maintain our robust deterrent and readiness posture in Northeast Asia, in close collaboration with our regional allies.

*Question.* In your view, what should be the United States overall strategy to mitigate the threat posed by North Korea to our allies in the region and to the United States?

*Answer.* As I understand it, the administration is currently in the midst of a whole-of-government strategy review to determine its way ahead on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Although I do not want to presuppose the outcome of the review, I believe that it is the role of the Department of Defense to maintain a robust defense and deterrence posture, and to ensure that the United States is well-positioned with forces and assets throughout the region to detect and respond to DPRK threats. This strong defense posture must underpin our efforts, irrespective of the outcome of the strategy review, to ensure that the United States engages the DPRK from a position of strength. We must also continue to pursue robust sanctions enforcement to mitigate the nuclear proliferation threat posed by North Korea. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across the Government, as well as our regional partners and allies to strengthen our defense posture, reassure our allies, and protect the U.S. Homeland.

*Question.* What policy recommendations would you make to ensure United States and allied forces can secure weapons of mass destruction sites in North Korea in the event of a contingency?

*Answer.* United States and ROK [Republic Of Korea] forces must maintain a "fight-tonight" readiness on the Korean peninsula to deter North Korean aggression and to be able to respond quickly and effectively should deterrence fail. As you noted, one critical component is securing nuclear and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) sites in order to prevent the further proliferation of these capabilities in a contingency. In order to do this effectively, the United States and allies must be able to characterize WMD sites accurately and be able secure them safely. I understand the Department of Defense (DOD) is improving capabilities that will reduce the threat posed by WMD and missile sites in North Korea in the event of a contingency, and is working closely with the Republic of Korea to execute this mission. If confirmed, I will work closely with our operational commanders, intelligence specialists, and resource providers in this effort. I will also work closely with my counterparts from across the Department to provide the Secretary with integrated recommendations to maintain our forces' readiness to deter aggression and address contingencies.

*Question.* In your view, should the United States force posture on the Korean peninsula be adjusted, and if so, how?

*Answer.* President Biden recently announced a global posture review to ensure that United States forces deployed globally are matched with the global threat environment. I do not want to presuppose its outcome. What I will say is that our security commitment to the Republic of Korea is unshakable and consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty. This commitment is not tied to a "magic number" of forces, or to a specific capability, but rather to a 70-year alliance relationship based on common values and people-to-people ties. As President Biden said, "Alliances are our greatest asset." Our force posture in South Korea ensures our ability to "fight tonight" alongside our ROK allies, and it is critical to regional stability. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the objectives of the National Defense Strategy and the necessary requirements of our major operational plans across the region to

ensure that our global force is optimally deployed to meet emerging challenges, including those on the Korean Peninsula.

#### REPUBLIC OF KOREA

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current U. S.-South Korean security relationship?

*Answer.* The United States-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance is a linchpin of peace and security in the region. The resilience of our partnership is founded on shared interests and values, which have endured for more than 70 years. Our alliance is among the most combined, interoperable, capable, and dynamic bilateral alliances in the world, and it is a robust deterrent to aggression on the Korean Peninsula. It also has evolved beyond a purely military alliance to one that reflects mutual respect and encompasses support for free markets, civic engagement, people-to-people exchanges, and education. Over a few decades, South Korea has gone from being a net security recipient to a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific region. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with our ROK allies on identifying and addressing future security challenges beyond the Korean Peninsula, including robust cooperation in response to Chinese malign activities in the region, maintaining the rules-based international order, and capacity building for other regional partners in the Indo-Pacific region.

*Question.* What is the value to U.S. national security of the United States-South Korea alliance?

*Answer.* The United States-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance is critical not only to the security of the ROK, but also to the stability of the Indo-Pacific region—the Department's priority theater. Given the unprecedented challenges posed by both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China, the United States-ROK alliance has never been more important. On North Korea, United States and ROK forces have been critical to deterring North Korean aggression for more than 70 years, and these forces have been postured to respond should deterrence fail. This posture provides a credible military force to underpin any prospective political or diplomatic efforts to achieve final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. However, the ROK is also a critical partner for our broader priorities in the region, and principal among these priorities is upholding the rules-based international order that has underpinned unprecedented global prosperity since World War II, including that of the ROK.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the United States obligations in the event of an attack on South Korea by North Korea, and when United States armed forces should be committed to engage North Korean forces in response to an attack on South Korea?

*Answer.* The United States obligation to the Republic of Korea in the event of an attack, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty, is to consult on the best appropriate response and act together in the defense of the Republic of Korea. If confirmed, I will remain committed to building a posture that is robustly capable of deterring, defending, and, if necessary, defeating any adversary that threatens our treaty ally.

*Question.* Under what conditions should wartime operational control be transferred from the United States to the Republic of Korea?

*Answer.* Operational Control (OPCON) transition remains conditions-based, consistent with the bilaterally determined conditions articulated in the OPCON Transition Plan (COT-P). Any transfer of wartime operational control must fundamentally strengthen our combined defense posture. The conditions set forth in the COT-P were designed to do just that—strengthen our combined posture. We cannot take shortcuts. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to ensure all conditions for OPCON transition are met, and that our alliance remains the most interoperable, capable, and dynamic bilateral alliance in the world.

*Question.* In your view, should United States forces on the Korean Peninsula remain focused on defense of South Korea or should United States forces in Korea also be available for regional or global operations?

*Answer.* The United States must maintain operational flexibility to ensure that our forces are optimized and ready to meet emerging threats to U.S. forces and allies and partners in the region and around the world. In order to meet the objectives of the National Defense Strategy, the Defense Department will continually consider adjustments to every command in every theater to ensure the optimization of our global force. If confirmed, I will prioritize a continued evolution of our strategic alliance with the ROK to ensure that we are well-postured to address new and evolving threats, consistent with our respective national-level strategies.

## JAPAN

*Question.* How would you characterize the United States-Japan security relationship?

*Answer.* The United States-Japan security relationship is strong, resolute, and resilient. We have placed emphasis on broadening the scope of the alliance, increasing Japan's role in securing a free and open Indo-Pacific region, through bilateral and multilateral efforts.

*Question.* How does Japan's relationship with its regional neighbors, predominantly China, North Korea and South Korea, influence the United States-Japan relationship?

*Answer.* Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) are two of our most important allies in the Indo-Pacific region. In the face of shared challenges posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China, it is critical that there are strong and close relationships between and among our three countries. Although we recognize the role that history plays in the Japan-ROK relationship, we encourage the Republic of Korea and Japan to seek ways to cooperate further through bilateral and multilateral activities in security matters, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution enforcement operations against North Korean ship-to-ship transfers. We support those efforts.

*Question.* What steps should Japan take to become a more active partner in security activities with the United States and in the international security arena?

*Answer.* We are engaged in continuous discussion with our Japanese allies on ways in which they can increase their support for regional and global security efforts, while acknowledging the legacy regional and domestic constraints Japan must consider. We are encouraged that the Japan Self Defense Forces are a capable and well-equipped component of Japan's steadily growing international presence.

*Question.* The current plan is to close the Marine Corps Air Station on Okinawa after the construction of a Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF) at Camp Schwab. In your view, what are the prospects for the successful construction of the Futenma Replacement Facility at Camp Schwab on Okinawa?

*Answer.* The Government of Japan has given us its assurance of the commitment to complete the construction of the FRF at Camp Schwab, and progress continues. Although delays in the construction are disappointing, they are neither unexpected nor particularly unusual. Both sides have committed to maintaining the capability of MCAS Okinawa until such time that the FRF is operational.

*Question.* What areas of security cooperation, such as missile defense and space, would you recommend the United States and Japan prioritize to improve United States-Japanese interoperability and capability?

*Answer.* We are very encouraged that Japan has placed special emphasis on what it calls the "new domains" of cyber, space, and electromagnetic operations. Additionally, we consider Japan to be a premier partner in missile defense cooperation. At the same time, we are encouraging Japan to focus on the readiness and sustainability and modernization of its regular ground, maritime, and air forces. In short, we are cooperating in improving the capabilities of the alliance across the entire spectrum of operations.

## INDIA

*Question.* What would be your strategy, if confirmed, for bolstering the overall defense relationship between the United States and India? What specific priorities would you establish for this relationship?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would continue to operationalize India's status as a "Major Defense Partner" by positioning the United States and Indian militaries to cooperate more closely to advance shared interests in the Indo-Pacific region. To this end, I would support efforts to strengthen interoperability; expand bilateral and multilateral security cooperation across the region; and deepen defense trade and technology sharing. I also would leverage regular senior-level bilateral and multilateral engagements with likeminded partners to bolster the relationship.

To continue elevating the United States-India partnership, I would prioritize a few promising areas of cooperation. These include deepening information-sharing and mutual logistics operations; growing our defense trade and technology relationship; and expanding high-end cooperation in the maritime domain, including in the Indian Ocean region and in Southeast Asia. Importantly, I also would seek to expand multilateral cooperation with like-minded partners in the region, including through the Quad, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) mechanisms, and other regional engagements.

*Question.* In your view, what is the significance of the recent China-India border clashes?

*Answer.* The India-China border tensions reflect a concerning trend of growing aggressiveness and assertiveness by China in the region, including toward allies and partners of the United States. We will continue to stand by our allies and partners and support their ongoing efforts to de-escalate the situation. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor the situation closely as both parties work toward peaceful resolution.

*Question.* What would be your priorities for United States foreign military sales to India?

*Answer.* The past decade has seen promising trends in the United States-India defense trade and technology relationship, and, if confirmed, I will work to sustain these trends, including through a focus on major procurements and high-end technology.

#### REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

*Question.* What is your view of U. S.-Philippine military-to-military relations?

*Answer.* The Philippines is a treaty ally, and we have a long history of mutual defense cooperation dating back to World War II. The Mutual Defense Treaty and other bilateral defense agreements provide the foundation for the defense relationship and enable critical U.S. military support, presence, and interoperability. I also understand the United States provides important support to combat terrorism in the southern Philippines.

*Question.* What should be the U. S. security goals in the Republic of the Philippines?

*Answer.* The United States and the Philippines share the goal of upholding a free and open Indo-Pacific region that supports peace, stability, and economic opportunity. If confirmed, I would continue to prioritize partnering with the Philippines on maritime security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance, and defense institution building. Expanding defense cooperation in these areas would build our respective capabilities and increase interoperability between our forces.

*Question.* Would you recommend steps to promote defense cooperation and preserve future geostrategic options despite short-term authoritarian government trends in the Philippines? If so, please explain.

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would support continued defense cooperation with the Philippines as critical to our shared goals of advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific region. In its alliances, the United States seeks ways to encourage the Philippines' respect the rule of law and human rights.

#### THAILAND

*Question.* What is your view on the importance of the United States-Thai alliance?

*Answer.* The United States-Thai alliance is critical to supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Our longstanding defense cooperation and Thailand's role as a regional transit point facilitate U.S. presence in the region.

*Question.* What recommendations would you have for strengthening the Thai alliance?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would seek to strengthen interoperability, professional military education and training, and regional cooperation, including in the maritime domain, with Thailand.

#### VIETNAM

*Question.* What, in your view, are the best opportunities for increased defense cooperation with Vietnam?

*Answer.* The United States and Vietnam share a common interest in upholding a rules-based, free and open order in the Indo-Pacific region, including Southeast Asia. If confirmed, I would continue efforts to strengthen defense cooperation with Vietnam, particularly in the areas of maritime security, cyber security, defense trade, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and peacekeeping operations.

*Question.* Do you agree that addressing war legacy issues, including through new cooperative arrangements, is essential for United States-Vietnam defense relations?

*Answer.* The United States' decades-long cooperation with Vietnam on legacy-of-war issues and Missing in Action (MIA) accounting is a foundation of our defense relationship. If confirmed, I would be open to considering ways to expand this engagement so that we can reconcile the past and continue building a cooperative future.

## INDONESIA

*Question.* What is your view of the current state of military-to-military relations with Indonesia and, specifically, Kopassus?

*Answer.* Defense relations between the United States and Indonesia are strong. Where possible, I understand that we plan to increase the scale and complexity of our engagements to bolster our bilateral relationship and strengthen the Indonesian military's ability to defend its territory. I understand that, in consultation with Congress, the Department of Defense is planning for a limited resumption of training with KOPASSUS Unit 81, which will include a focus on human rights, in an effort to help cultivate the next generation of Indonesian leaders.

*Question.* Do you favor more United States-Indonesian military-to-military contacts and under what conditions?

*Answer.* Yes, I do favor more interactions between the U.S and Indonesian militaries, particularly those interactions that contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific region, help Indonesia protect its sovereignty, and promote the Indonesian military's respect for human rights and its role in Indonesia's democracy.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would you do to encourage respect for human rights and accountability in the Indonesian military?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would continue the focus on human rights and accountability in interactions with senior Indonesian leaders, and would urge the same emphasis in all military engagements.

## RUSSIA

*Question.* What do you believe are the greatest challenges for United States-Russia security relations?

*Answer.* Relations between the United States and Russia may have reached an all-time low since the end of the Cold War. If we are unable to re-establish Russia's understanding of and compliance with international norms and acceptable behavior in the international arena, the relationship will continue to decline. Reconstructing this baseline of norms will be challenging, but it is a prerequisite to any sustainable normalization of relations between our countries.

*Question.* How would you describe the central objectives of United States security strategy regarding Russia?

*Answer.* I understand that President Biden and the national security team are developing an approach to Russia that includes holding them accountable for their pattern of malign behavior and actions, including the recent SolarWinds intrusion, NotPetya, and other malicious cyber activity around the world. I personally think that the Department would want to ensure that any approach to Russia should maintain its military edge, including investing in the force posture and capabilities necessary to continue to deter Russia from attacking our Homeland or our allies through military means. In addition to the paramount concerns of conventional and nuclear defense, Russia has shown that it has the ability and intent to target the sources of American strength. We must do more to defend the American way of life, our economy, our people, and our democratic institutions from all states that would seek to undermine them, including Russia.

*Question.* Where do United States and Russian security interests align and where do they diverge?

*Answer.* Russia behavior indicates it seeks to undermine and overturn the rules-based international order established during the post-World War II period. From its blatant disregard for the sovereignty of its neighbors, to using chemical weapons to murder dissidents around the world, persistent cyber attacks against its neighbors and Russia's contempt for the international rules of the road makes Americans less safe. Over the past four years, it has expanded its military footprint abroad, largely by taking advantage of crises. This strategic orientation is largely incompatible with the principles of democratic societies governed by the rule of law.

Still, there are a few basic areas where our interests may overlap. Russia's foremost security interest is the survival of the Putin regime, and so ensuring strategic stability and minimizing the risk of unintended escalation across all domains that could lead to conventional or nuclear warfare remains a common imperative.

*Question.* How do EUCOM and NATO activities fit into a "whole-of-government" approach to deterring Russian aggression?

*Answer.* My understanding is that United States European Command (USEUCOM) and NATO continue to provide a powerful deterrent to Russian aggression with forward-postured, combat-credible forces, demonstrating both capability and capacity to respond decisively to any threat. These forces also complement broader whole-of-government initiatives to build partner capacity to resist and respond to Russian malign actions. If confirmed, I will review Department of Defense

authorities, resources, and policies to ensure that DOD is optimally positioned to support U.S. whole-of-government efforts.

*Question.* What do you see as the role of forward-deployed United States forces in Europe in deterring Russian aggression against our NATO allies and partners?

Answer. United States forces in Europe are a tangible signal of the United States commitment to the collective security of the NATO Alliance. Although the United States demonstrates combat-credibility of our forces with our force presence and unilateral exercises in the region; our support and integration with NATO activities, exercises, and security cooperation programs provide the greatest deterrent to Russian adventurism and aggression. United States presence and training provide lethal, resilient, and agile formations and demonstrate the alliance's combat-credible capability and capacity to operate throughout Europe.

*Question.* What is your view of Russia-China relations?

Answer. Russia and China collaborate in the economic, diplomatic, and military/security arenas. Although they do not agree on everything, Russia and China align when it suits them. Each poses different challenges to the United States and has different motivations for its actions. But both countries seek to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model, gaining leverage over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions. Both nations undermine global security and the rules-based order by undercutting such basic values as liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. They share a preference for a world in which the United States and its allies and partners are weaker, less unified, and less influential. Together with allies and partners, we must be vigilant and united in opposing their malign action and influence.

*Question.* In your assessment, does the DOD currently have a mature joint concept of operations and the necessary capabilities in sufficient capacity to mitigate the challenge of Russian A2/AD capabilities? If not, what changes should be implemented?

Answer. My understanding is the Department is developing a Joint Warfighting Concept, which aims to address this issue. If confirmed, I will review this effort, and provide my assessment and recommendations to the Secretary of Defense.

If confirmed and if required, I will work within the Department to assess the need for and then identify how to implement updates to our concept of operations and related capabilities.

*Question.* In your view, what are the key elements of an effective strategy to counter Russian hybrid warfare?

Answer. Russia has responded to United States and NATO conventional capability overmatch by tailoring an asymmetric approach at every point across the spectrum from competition to conflict. Russian hybrid warfare injects uncertainty and risk into the modern competitive landscape. An effective strategy to counter Russian hybrid warfare requires that DOD innovate and operationalize our irregular warfare toolkit, as part of a broader interagency strategy that integrates all elements of United States Government power and authorities, at both the strategic and operational levels, to compete with Russia across the spectrum.

#### ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS WITH RUSSIA

*Question.* In your view, what is the appropriate role of arms control in the United States security strategy regarding Russia?

Answer. If negotiated effectively, arms control agreements can enhance U.S. national security. Any future arms control agreement with Russia must strengthen deterrence and provide assurance to our allies and partners. It should also be verifiable and increase transparency and predictability with regard to Russian nuclear forces that are currently not subject to any arms control agreement.

*Question.* How can DOD mitigate any negative consequences associated with U.S. withdrawal from the INF and Open Skies treaties, and reassure NATO allies?

Answer. After consultations with allies, the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in 2019 and the Open Skies Treaty (OST) in 2020 following years of Russian violations. The United States should continue to coordinate closely with allies and key partners on the intermediate-range systems Russia produced and deployed in violation of the INF Treaty, and on increasing military transparency in Europe and Eurasia through other important confidence- and security-building mechanisms.

*Question.* Do you support mutually-agreed reductions in tactical nuclear weapons?

Answer. Addressing the increasing disparity between the United States and Russian stockpiles of non-strategic nuclear weapons is a national security imperative. One way to do this is through concluding an effective and verifiable arms control agreement. The U.S. Senate recognized this imperative in a condition to its resolu-



tion of ratification for the New START Treaty. If confirmed, I commit to working to fulfill that condition in a way that enhances the national security of the United States and its allies and partners.

*Question.* Do you believe that U.S. missile defenses should be considered in any future arms control negotiations?

Answer. This Administration has made clear that it remains committed to effective arms control. The extension of the New START Treaty increases the national security of the United States and its allies and partners. The extension is just the beginning, not the end, of President Biden's efforts to engage Russia and other countries to reduce threats from Russia and other countries. If confirmed, I will work to ensure DOD has a role in any forthcoming reviews of missile defense and nuclear arms control.

#### NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

*Question.* In your assessment, does the NATO Alliance continue to benefit the national security interests of the United States?

Answer. Yes. NATO is the bedrock of enduring transatlantic security and serves as the bulwark of our shared values of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.

*Question.* How important to U.S. strategic interests is the U.S. commitment to its obligations under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty?

Answer. U.S. commitment to NATO Allies under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is vital to U.S. strategic interests. This shared commitment among NATO Allies is the cornerstone of the NATO's strength and has helped safeguard our way of life for decades.

*Question.* What do you view as the essential strategic objectives of the NATO Alliance in the coming years and what do you perceive are the greatest challenges?

Answer. NATO's essential strategic objectives remain its ability to deter aggression, defend Allied populations and territory if deterrence fails, and project stability beyond NATO's borders. NATO's greatest challenges include maintaining unity and ensuring ready forces and capabilities.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current levels of Allied contributions to burden sharing and should our Allies do more to meet their commitments on defense spending and procurement?

Answer. I am encouraged that the Alliance is entering its seventh consecutive year of growth in defense spending. We must continue to build on this progress to fulfill the 2014 Wales Summit Defense Investment Pledge. Defense spending is essential to ensuring we have the ready forces and capabilities to address the challenges facing NATO.

*Question.* If confirmed how will you encourage NATO Allies to maintain a positive trajectory on defense spending even as COVID-19 continues to strain their economies?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize the importance of fulfilling the 2014 Wales Summit Defense Investment Pledge. We all must do our part to procure, prepare, and provide the ready forces and capabilities. Although COVID-19 poses a challenge, we want to see every member of the Alliance contribute its fair share.

The NATO Readiness Initiative commits Allies to the "Four Thirties" plan—30 battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 naval combat vessels—ready to use within 30 days.

*Question.* If confirmed, what steps would you recommend to ensure the readiness and interoperability of these "Four Thirties" units?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the plan approved by Allies to train, certify, and maintain the units associated with the "Four Thirties." Maintaining ready and interoperable forces and capabilities will be one of my highest priorities as we rebuild a culture of readiness at NATO.

NATO has taken a number of steps to adapt its Command Structure, including the decision to stand up the NATO Joint Force Command for the Atlantic in Norfolk, Virginia, and the NATO Joint Support and Enabling Command in Ulm, Germany.

*Question.* If confirmed, what criteria would you use for defining and measuring the success of these NATO commands in enhancing credible deterrence?

Answer. An adaptive NATO Command Structure greatly improves how the Alliance addresses a range of threats. I expect the newly established U.S. Second Fleet and Joint Force Command (JFC) Norfolk increases Allied maritime domain awareness and capability; and also that they would lead in exercises and operations in the Atlantic to secure our sea lines of communication.

*Question.* In your view, is there a continuing requirement for deploying U.S. nuclear weapons in NATO countries?

*Answer.* Yes. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capabilities is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in NATO countries for the last 60 years has successfully deterred aggression against the Alliance, and this cooperation continues to provide an essential political and military link between Europe and North America. In my view, U.S. nuclear weapons should remain in NATO countries for as long as nuclear weapons remain a threat.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the role that the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) has played in increasing combat capability in Europe and enhancing deterrence of Russian aggression? What role would you foresee for EDI going forward? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* EDI funding has enabled DOD to increase its force presence in Europe, improve critical capabilities, establish pre-positioned equipment sets, and execute readiness-building exercises, all of which have contributed greatly to increasing United States European Command's combat capability and enhancing deterrence of Russian aggression.

If confirmed, I look forward to examining how the EDI can be used going forward.

*Question.* In your view, should EDI include funding for military construction in Europe, and if so, under what circumstances or criteria?

*Answer.* I understand that military construction has been one of the five lines of effort within the EDI since 2017. If confirmed, I will examine under what circumstances military construction should continue to be a part of the EDI.

Last year, the U.S. Army was prepared to execute DEFENDER 2020, which would have been one of the largest exercises since the Cold War, with support of many Allies and partners, but it was largely truncated due to COVID-19.

*Question.* If confirmed, how will you work with the U.S. Army, EUCOM, and NATO to glean lessons learned from this episode and execute large future exercises?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that because all of the planning and much of the personnel movement for DEFENDER 2020 began prior to the exercise curtailment due to COVID-19, United States European Command (USEUCOM) and NATO were able to identify and catalogue many of the strategic, operational, and logistics lessons a full-scale exercise would have illuminated. If confirmed, I plan to review the DEFENDER 2020 after-action report and work with the Joint Staff, USEUCOM, and USNATO to ensure those lessons are reflected in future largescale U.S., multi-lateral, and NATO exercises.

*Question.* In what other ways can the Department support efforts to deter Russia while strengthening our alliances and partnerships in Europe?

*Answer.* As Russia increasingly utilizes a whole-of-government approach to achieving its geopolitical objectives, the Department of Defense continues to organize its resources to compete with Russia below the level of armed conflict. Engaging our allies and partners in these endeavors is critical to countering Russian influence by deterring and defending against all forms of coercion and aggressive actions and building partner capacity to resist hybrid threats. Additionally, I believe the Department could also support State Department and national security council colleagues as they work with Allies and partners to collectively denounce Russia's unacceptable behavior and develop international consensus to take action in response to that behavior.

#### UKRAINE

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current United States-Ukraine security relationship?

*Answer.* The United States maintains a robust strategic defense partnership with Ukraine. Ukraine continues to contribute to United States and transatlantic security by providing forces to NATO operations.

*Question.* Do you support continued United States security assistance to Ukraine, including lethal defensive assistance? Are there specific capabilities that in your view should be prioritized to be enhanced through the provision of United States security assistance?

*Answer.* Yes. Since 2014, the United States has committed more than \$2 billion in security assistance to help Ukraine's forces preserve the country's territorial integrity and progress toward NATO interoperability. The Department's security assistance programs, including lethal assistance for defensive purposes, are essential components of efforts to build the capacity of Ukraine's forces.

If confirmed, I'll examine the Department's current efforts and Ukraine's requirements closely, but continued support to enhance Ukraine's defensive lethal capabilities in the maritime domain will likely remain a top near-term priority.

*Question.* How does the provision of assistance to Ukraine contribute to a broader United States security strategy in Europe?

Answer. U.S. security is enhanced by supporting a strategic partner that shares our values and the universal principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. DOD security assistance programs, combined with efforts to improve the readiness of United States forces in Europe through programs like the European Deterrence Initiative, help to deter further aggressive Russian actions in the region.

#### UNITED STATES AND NATO FORCE POSTURE IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE AND THE BLACK SEA

*Question.* In your view, is the security and stability of the Southeastern European region and the Black Sea in the United States national security interest?

Answer. The security and stability of Southeastern Europe and the Black Sea region are in the United States national interest and are critical to the security of NATO's eastern flank. This region is vulnerable to Russian aggression, evidenced by ongoing actions in eastern Ukraine, occupation of parts of Georgia, militarization of the Black Sea, and provocative actions in the air and at sea. Russia's destabilizing activities in and around the Black Sea reflect its ambitions to maintain a dominant position in its so-called near-abroad and prevent the realization of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. Furthermore, Russia is using its purported annexation of Crimea as a force projection platform to extend its forces further to the eastern Mediterranean and North Africa.

*Question.* NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) includes approximately 650 United States servicemembers. Do you believe the United States should maintain its commitment to KFOR?

Answer. United States deployment to NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR), which helps ensure security and stability both in Kosovo and across the Western Balkans, contributes directly to the success of KFOR's mission set. The U.S. and NATO presence also provides a vital deterrent to malign actors who seek to undermine sovereignty and peace in the region. We continue to rely heavily on the efforts of our Allies and partners in KFOR, who contribute more than 2,800 military personnel—up to 80 percent of the total force. If confirmed, I will ensure consultation with NATO Allies and partners is the highest priority when discussing the distribution of U.S. forces and capabilities in KFOR.

NATO has maintained an "enhanced" forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance, while deploying a more limited "tailored" forward presence in the southeastern region and the Black Sea.

*Question.* Do you support efforts to boost NATO's forward presence in the southeast and Black Sea region?

Answer. Yes. If confirmed, I will review our force posture in this region and ensure the strength of our deterrence along NATO's Eastern and Southern flanks.

Former Secretary Esper issued a plan, the European Strategic Posture Realignment, in 2020. This committee was concerned about some elements of that plan, such as the reduction of forces in Germany. However, other aspects of it may be worth continued consideration.

*Question.* What are your views on former Secretary Esper's realignment plan?

Answer. With the President's lifting of the 25,000 United States personnel cap for Germany, DOD will re-examine the realignment plan through the Global Posture Review process to determine what elements of it are in line with this Administration's national security priorities and should be pursued.

#### U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTCOM)

*Question.* To what extent does achieving United States national security interests in the Middle East require a continuous United States military presence there, in your view? In your opinion, is the current United States force presence in the Middle East appropriately sized? Please explain your answer.

Answer. It is important for DOD to review its military posture in the Middle East continually to ensure it is sustainable to defend against threats to the Homeland and respond to contingencies, while maintaining focus on our global strategy. Our presence provides opportunities for security cooperation with our partners in the region as we seek to cultivate their military capabilities and build interoperability to pursue shared objectives. If confirmed, I will evaluate the United States force presence in the Middle East, including the opportunities and challenges presented, and provide my recommendations to the Secretary of Defense.

I believe that we must right-size our military posture to the level required to assist our partners with their security, disrupt international terrorist networks, deter Iranian aggression, and protect other United States interests. I believe that Secretary Austin's Global Force Posture Review will help to shape these choices to ensure they are aligned with our strategic objectives, values, and resources. If confirmed, I will assess our force presence in the Middle East in the broader context of our global posture, and provide my recommendations to the Secretary of Defense.

*Question.* What opportunities exist for increasing burden-sharing with United States regional and European partners to counter threats emanating from and affecting the CENTCOM AOR?

*Answer.* I think an important element to DOD's approach in the Middle East is burden-sharing with allies and partners. The Department has included regional partner participation in the International Maritime Security Construct and in an expanded NATO mission to advise Iraqi security institutions and forces, for example. Our partners are increasing investments in their defense capabilities, and if confirmed, I will support the exploration of additional opportunities to enhance security cooperation.

*Question.* To what extent is the Middle East relevant to great power competition? How should DOD consider countering Russia and China in the Middle East, in your view? What other elements of national power and policy tools might be useful?

*Answer.* The Middle East is increasingly a key theater for great power competition. I expect it will remain so, and Russian and Chinese attempts to build inroads there suggest our rivals believe the same.

I believe that military force is not the answer to the region's challenges. In the face of strategic challenges from China and Russia, we will assess the appropriate structure and sizing of the force and will develop capabilities to compete with them and deter their gray zone actions more effectively. In my view, DOD should continue investing in regional partnerships. By supporting regional partners and affirming common interests to counter common threats, we can ensure that the United States will remain the partner of choice in the Middle East.

The United States retains many advantages, including our formidable combination of economic power, innovative dynamism, democratic values, military might, and global alliances. If we capitalize on these advantages, we can approach both competition and cooperation from a position of relative strength. We also must pursue sustained diplomacy to advance our interests, de-escalate regional tensions, and create space for people throughout the Middle East to realize their aspirations.

#### AFGHANISTAN

*Question.* In your view, should United States troop levels in Afghanistan be tied to the achievement of certain conditions on the ground? If so, what conditions would you factor into your recommendation to the President on troop levels in Afghanistan, if confirmed?

*Answer.* United States force levels in Afghanistan should be tied to conditions on the ground, but also need to be set in the context of United States and partner interests in the region. Any change in force levels should support diplomatic efforts and should be executed in close consultation with our NATO Resolute Support partners. If confirmed, I will assess our strategic posture with Office of the Secretary of Defense experts, U.S. military leadership, and our allies and partners to develop recommendations for potential changes in our approach.

*Question.* Is it your understanding that the United States military presence in Afghanistan is currently "conditions-based"?

*Answer.* United States Forces are in Afghanistan in support of United States national security interests. My understanding is that the current U.S. military presence of 2,500 forces was reached on January 15, 2021, pursuant to then-President Trump's direction as announced by then-Acting Secretary of Defense Miller on November 17, 2020. The administration is currently reviewing policy options for Afghanistan, which could impact the number of United States Forces in the country.

*Question.* If so, what is your understanding of the conditions prerequisite to drawing down the U.S. military presence there?

*Answer.* My understanding is that under the United States-Taliban Agreement, the Taliban's continued participation in intra-Afghan negotiations fulfills a key element of the United States-Taliban Agreement. I also understand that the Taliban have made specific commitments regarding counterterrorism and reducing violence, although press reports indicate that violence in Afghanistan has been above seasonal norms throughout the peace process that began in September 2020.

*Question.* If the United States does not fully withdraw its troops by May 2021 because the Taliban has not met the conditions under the February 2020 United States-Taliban Agreement, how do you expect the Taliban to respond?

*Answer.* The United States is committed to peace in Afghanistan and is actively encouraging all sides to meet their commitments in furtherance of a political settlement to the conflict. It is possible that the Taliban will resume attacks on United States and Resolute Support Coalition forces. My understanding is that the Commander of United States Forces in Afghanistan is confident that United States and partner forces can defend themselves while continuing their mission, although they would be at higher risk if the Taliban resumed attacks.

*Question.* What type of adjustments to United States Force posture, if any, would you recommend to prepare for the Taliban's possible response?

*Answer.* Force protection is a top priority for any commander, and any adjustments to prepare for a resumption in Taliban attacks should be left to the commander on the ground. If confirmed, I would work with the Joint Staff and U.S. Central Command to ensure that the Commander of United States Forces in Afghanistan has whatever authorities and resources he needs to be postured appropriately.

*Question.* In your view, will the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) continue to require financial support to maintain effective operational capacity and capability?

*Answer.* Yes. I understand DOD funding provides three-fourths of the cost of sustaining Afghan combat operations and developing capabilities such as aviation and special forces. Even if a peace agreement is achieved, I would anticipate that the ANDSF would still require international funding to maintain viability as a stabilizing force.

*Question.* Do you support continuing efforts to train and equip the ANDSF?

*Answer.* My understanding is that DOD's efforts to train and equip the ANDSF have mostly been completed and that DOD now focuses primarily on sustaining ANDSF combat operations. I understand that the two exceptions to this are the Afghan Special Forces and the Afghan Air Force, which continue to receive train-and-equip support. The Afghan Special Forces and the Afghan Air Force are effective fighting forces. If confirmed, I would support continuing to train and equip these forces in a manner consistent with the overall strategic approach the President chooses.

*Question.* Is a capable, well-trained and managed ANDSF critical to achieving a successful political settlement and preventing further conflict in Afghanistan?

*Answer.* The Afghan Army is the most respected institution in the country and is an important source of national cohesion. As such, it is essential for future stability under any type of political settlement.

*Question.* Would it be counterproductive to cut programs designed to mature the leadership and management of the Afghan forces?

*Answer.* My understanding is that Resolute Support has focused on identifying Afghan security leaders with good potential, and then investing in them through training and advising. In any military organization, leadership is the key to success.

#### PAKISTAN

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to United States relations with Pakistan, particularly in terms of military-to-military relations?

*Answer.* Pakistan is an important partner. If confirmed, I will focus on taking advantage of shared interests such as counter-terrorism, peace in Afghanistan, and regional stability. We should seek means to develop relationships with Pakistan's military leaders, including through continued use of the International Military Education and Training program.

*Question.* What additional steps can the United States take with Pakistan to ensure that its territory does not continue to be used as a sanctuary for militants and violent extremist organizations (VEOs)?

*Answer.* Pakistan needs to redouble its efforts to ensure its territory is not being used as a sanctuary for militants and violent extremist organizations. Pakistan is entitled to security within its borders, and the United States can play an important role to help promote stability and security across the region.

#### SYRIA AND IRAQ

*Question.* What is your understanding of current United States strategy and objectives in Syria?

Answer. United States national security objectives in Syria include preventing the resurgence of ISIS so that it cannot directly threaten the United States and its interests; maintaining pressure on al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups; preventing a renewal of fighting that produces large-scale refugee flows that further destabilize United States allies and partners; promoting the provision of life-saving humanitarian aid to Syrian civilians in need; securing reforms in Syria that improve the welfare of Syrian civilians; and preventing the outbreak of broader regional conflict.

*Question.* From a DOD standpoint, what must be done to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS, in your view? What non-military efforts are necessary to sustain the enduring defeat of ISIS?

Answer. The enduring defeat of ISIS will require a whole-of-government approach and working together with our partners in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The objective should be to address the underlying political, economic, and social grievances that ISIS exploits. To this end, it is critical that United States and Coalition forces continue to improve the capacity of our local partner forces to enable them to conduct counter-ISIS operations independently.

The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) play a critical role in countering ISIS. However, as long as underlying grievances that facilitated ISIS' rapid expansion remain unaddressed, ISIS' ability to reconstitute remains a threat. Our partners face the dual challenge of continued counter-ISIS military operations while enabling stabilization and recovery efforts in communities liberated from ISIS. DOD should support our civilian agencies in providing stabilization assistance and non-military support to communities recovering from ISIS. Additionally, our local partners and the communities seeking to rebuild require the assurance of sustained U.S. and Coalition commitment to their recovery. We should ensure the commitment of our allies and partners to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, both the military and non-military efforts to defeat ISIS. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the other departments and agencies on this effort.

*Question.* In your personal view, are there any conditions under which Bashar al-Assad should be permitted to remain President of Syria?

Answer. I support a nationwide ceasefire and efforts to resolve the Syrian conflict in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254, which states "that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis in Syria is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people."

*Question.* What do you perceive to be the role of the Syrian Democratic Forces and Iraq Security Forces in countering ISIS, now that its caliphate has been eliminated?

Answer. I understand that the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS has made progress in the fight against ISIS, but recent attacks demonstrate that ISIS remains a threat. The United States works by, with, and through the Iraqi Security Forces and vetted Syrian partner forces, such as the Syrian Democratic Forces, to achieve the enduring defeat of ISIS. United States and Coalition forces should continue to develop the capacity of these groups to counter ISIS and al Qaeda.

*Question.* In your view, should United States troop levels in Syria be tied to the achievement of certain conditions on the ground? If so, and if confirmed, what conditions would you factor into your recommendation to the President on future troop levels in Syria?

Answer. U.S. force levels in any theater should be based on the capabilities necessary to perform the directed mission, in line with overall U.S. objectives.

If confirmed, I will review the status of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE in Iraq and Syria. I will base my recommendation on future force levels in both countries on my assessment of the progress of the campaign, the development of our local partners, and the capabilities necessary to perform the mission.

*Question.* In your view, do United States troops in Syria help counter Russian influence in the Middle East?

Answer. United States Forces are in Syria to enable the enduring defeat of ISIS. United States forces operate in a complex operating environment and, thus, as I understand it, they deconflict movements with Russian counterparts to prevent interactions from escalating.

*Question.* In your view, do United States troops in Syria help counter Iranian influence in the Middle East?

Answer. United States Forces are in Syria to enable the enduring defeat of ISIS.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the current United States strategy and objectives in Iraq?

Answer. The Iraqi people desire a secure, stable, and prosperous Iraq, able to defend itself against those who would undermine Iraq's security. The United States objective is to support Iraq in achieving these goals.

*Question.* In your view, should the United States train and equip Sunni Islamist groups in Syria?

*Answer.* The United States works by, with, and through vetted Syrian partner forces to enable the enduring defeat of ISIS. If confirmed, I will ensure that our Syrian partner forces continue to be appropriately vetted.

*Question.* With the dissolution of the Defeat-ISIS Task Force in December that integrated counterterrorism, multilateral, and regional efforts for the Department, how will you ensure continued focus on the defeat of ISIS and integration across multiple disciplines in DOD, and in collaboration with other federal departments and agencies?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will ensure that DOD teams, whether organized across traditional bureaucratic functions or through integrated task forces, will continue to collaborate and maintain focus on the Defeat-ISIS mission.

Iran

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

*Answer.* Iran continues to pose a significant conventional and unconventional threat to U.S. personnel and regional partners. Iran's current conventional threats include ballistic missiles in the region, capable of striking regional United States military bases, to naval forces that threaten freedom of navigation near the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's unconventional threats have evolved to include attacks on commercial shipping and oil facilities, global cyber attacks, and the proliferation of advanced conventional weapons. Iran also leverages regional militia groups to threaten United States Forces and partners and undermine regional sovereignty.

*Question.* Are United States military forces and capabilities currently deployed to the CENTCOM AOR adequate to deter and, if necessary, respond to threats posed by Iran?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will assess our Middle East posture in the context of our global posture, and provide my recommendations to the Secretary of Defense. In all geographic Combatant Commands, we need to review carefully the size, shape, and readiness of the force in dynamic security environments, striving for a flexible global posture that leverages our unmatched ability to deploy significant forces quickly anywhere in the world to deter and respond to threats.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the objectives of the United States security strategy with respect to Iran? What is the role of the U.S. military in this strategy?

*Answer.* I understand the United States strategy aims to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, protect our personnel and interests from Iranian threats, and counter Iran's destabilizing activities. Diplomacy is the primary tool for achieving these objectives. The Department of Defense supports the diplomatic effort by deterring and, if necessary, defending against Iranian aggression. More broadly, the Department of Defense supports regional stability through security cooperation and maintaining freedom of navigation.

*Question.* The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action entailed significant sanctions relief for Iran. Some of that sanctions relief was used to fund terrorist groups. In your view, should Iran be afforded sanctions relief without any specific carve outs or limitations?

*Answer.* It is my view that we should continue actively to enforce sanctions against Iran's support for terrorism, human rights abuses, missile program, and destabilizing activities.

*Question.* What danger would increased Iranian funds through sanctions relief pose to United States Forces, as well as to partners in the region?

*Answer.* It is my belief that Iran's attack calculus toward United States forces and our partners hinges primarily on its views of the broader strategic environment. For instance, the threat posed by the Iranian military and its proxies increased in the past few years despite the worsening Iranian economy and corresponding budgetary woes.

*Question.* According to the New York Times, Iran recently plotted to attack UAE embassies in Ethiopia and Sudan. What do you believe are Iran's objectives in Africa? What can be done to counter Iran's support for terrorism in Africa?

*Answer.* Iran has sought to increase its influence in Africa in recent years and likely views Africa as a permissive environment to plot attacks against its adversaries.

It is my view that robust cooperation with our partners in Africa, especially on shared interests such as intelligence sharing, can be effective in constraining Iran's support for terrorism and disrupting attack plots.

*Question.* If an Iranian-funded group attacks and kills an American citizen, should the United States maintain a "red line" and respond proportionately?

Answer. The protection of United States forces remains the highest priority for the Administration. Iran should know that the United States will hold it responsible for such an attack, and we will respond decisively at a time and place of our choosing.

## YEMEN

*Question.* What are the United States national security interests in Yemen?

Answer. The primary national security interest in Yemen remains ensuring that groups such as al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIS—Yemen cannot maintain a safe haven from which to conduct attacks against the United States Homeland. Additionally, the aggressive actions taken by the Houthis (further empowered by Iran) against our partners contribute to instability in the Middle East and threaten Saudi Arabia's territorial defense. It is in the United States' best interest for the parties in Yemen to reach a cessation of hostilities.

*Question.* In your view, has Saudi Arabia responded appropriately and proportionately to the threat they face from the Houthis?

Answer. Saudi Arabia's conduct of its military campaign in Yemen continues to raise concerns about the incidence of civilian casualties.

*Question.* What are the implications of the Biden Administration's decision to cease offensive support operations to the Saudi-led coalition?

Answer. There is no military solution to the war in Yemen. As the President stated, the U.S. is ending all United States support to Saudi-led offensive operations against the Houthis in Yemen. This includes both materiel and restricting United States information sharing with Saudi Arabia and the Saudi-led Coalition. It is in the United States' best interest for the parties in Yemen to reach a cessation of hostilities.

*Question.* To what extent are the Houthis, supported by Iran, a threat to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea? What policy positions would you recommend for the United States to address this threat?

Answer. The Houthis represent a threat to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea due to their offensive actions in the maritime domain. Further, the materiel and training support they receive from Iran have enhanced their lethal capabilities over time.

Answer. I support the renewed emphasis that the Biden Administration has placed on a two-track approach: diplomacy to end the war through a political solution, and enhanced relief efforts to address the worsening humanitarian situation.

*Question.* What do you assess to be the impact of the recent pause in weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, including precision-guided munitions?

Answer. My understanding is that the pause was to ensure that what is being considered advances our strategic and foreign policy objectives. As I understand it, the interagency process for working through the details of individual arms cases has been re-established, with relevant departments and agencies bringing expertise and discipline back to our policymaking.

*Question.* To what extent do you believe Saudi Arabia and its coalition partners have made progress in avoiding civilian casualties and ensuring appropriate accountability when allegations of civilian casualties arise?

Answer. My understanding is that the United States lacks sufficient insight into civilian casualty rates in Yemen. If confirmed, I will review how our partners are making progress in this critical area.

## EGYPT

*Question.* What is your assessment of the security situation in Egypt and the United States-Egypt security relationship?

Answer. Egypt faces a number of security challenges, such as ISIS-Sinai Province (ISIS-SP), the ongoing conflict in Libya, and border security threats. United States-Egypt security cooperation is increasingly focused on counterterrorism and border security. At the strategic level, both countries share an interest in improving regional security and stability.

*Question.* What role does the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) play in the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty? Should the U.S. maintain its military deployment to the MFO? What would be the risks of reducing this commitment?

Answer. The MFO has served to provide reassurance to both Israel and Egypt for almost 40 years by ensuring both parties adhere to the security provisions of the 1979 Egypt-Israel Treaty of Peace.

The MFO relies on United States contributions, including personnel, equipment, explosive ordnance disposal, aviation, and logistics, to support observation and monitoring in the Sinai. U.S. contributions to this mission anchor other countries' con-



tributions and bolster U.S. credibility as a leader in diplomatic and security initiatives globally. The MFO presence and organization provide Egypt and Israel a trusted mechanism to resolve disputes, avoid conflict, and foster dialogue on shared security concerns in the Sinai Peninsula.

Any changes to United States support would necessitate interagency and partner consultation regarding the potential impacts on the MFO, the Egypt-Israel Treaty of Peace, United States obligations under applicable international agreements, and regional stability. Risks could include potential reduction in support from other international MFO contributors and risk to the viability of this security construct.

*Question.* In your view, should the United States continue to provide defense articles and services purchased by the Egyptian military using United States Foreign Military Financing funds?

*Answer.* Any changes to the United States FMF program with Egypt will require a coordinated interagency review to ensure that U.S. national security interests are protected. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing all of our bilateral defense relationships.

*Question.* What is your assessment of Egypt's deepening ties with Russia? Where do United States and Russian interests converge in Egypt? Where do they diverge?

*Answer.* Egypt is actively diversifying its military cooperation with other foreign partners, including Russia. These deepening ties have been demonstrated in recent years through key leader engagements, military drills, joint infrastructure projects, and Egypt's pursuit of Russian military equipment, such as Su-35 fighter aircraft. The United States has an interest in a politically inclusive, economically vibrant, and secure Egypt with a professional military force that can protect its land and maritime borders and counter terrorism in the Sinai, and that respects civilian control of the military and human rights. Russia does not share those interests.

#### UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM)

*Question.* The 2018 NDS makes little reference to Africa and its myriad security challenges. In your view, what should be the role of AFRICOM in NDS implementation?

*Answer.* Africa is a continent with great opportunities to advance common values and security interests. A key challenge, however, is the threat posed by violent extremist organizations (VEOs) to United States interests in both East and West Africa; another involves Chinese and Russian strategic competition for access, influence, and values. AFRICOM plays a supporting role in advancing U.S. national security interests through a whole-of-government effort and simultaneously preserves U.S. access and influence to protect our people, partners, resources, and interests. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department of Defense works seamlessly with other U.S. departments and agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State, to align priorities and limited resources accordingly, advancing lasting peace and security on the continent. I will also, where appropriate, work closely with our allies and partners to achieve our national security objectives.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the availability and predictability of forces and capabilities to support the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan and crisis response?

*Answer.* Our by, with, and through approach to achieving security and stability in Africa largely proven effective with a limited forward presence. Often our security cooperation also enhances larger partner force operations, which achieve shared strategic objectives and build enduring relationships. Key to this approach is the limited forward presence on the continent and a focus on building African partner nation capabilities while supporting efforts of other international partners. If confirmed, I will assess all AFRICOM's requests and consider Commander, USAFICOM's requirements and requests for forces, and advise the Secretary with a view consistent with changes in the strategic environment and the direction provided in our national and defense strategies.

*Question.* What is your assessment of current United States counterterrorism strategies in AFRICOM?

*Answer.* We cannot ignore that persistent conflict in Africa will continue to generate threats to United States personnel, partners, and interests from violent extremist organizations (VEOs). I understand the Department's current strategy is to work by, with, and through allies and partners across Africa to disrupt and degrade threats from VEOs, transnational criminal organizations, human trafficking, and other malign influence. Two key elements of the Department's strategies are a whole-of-government approach to address the drivers of insecurity and instability, and close coordination with allies and partners. If confirmed, I will review the

counterterrorism strategies to ensure our resources are being employed appropriately and effectively toward mission success.

*Question.* What do you assess to be the strategic objectives of Russia and China in Africa?

*Answer.* Both Russia and China have expanded their strategic focus on Africa and use engagement in Africa to bolster their international standing, obtain access to raw materials, undermine Western influence, and pursue access agreements to support force projection in the region. However, the scale and methods vary widely between the two.

China has a multidimensional strategy to engage diplomatically, economically, culturally, as well as militarily across the Continent. China continues improvements to its first overseas military base in Djibouti and has expressed interest in opening more bases in Africa to expand China's geopolitical influence throughout the continent.

Russia markets its security services and experience to African countries as a means to expand its influence and challenge United States interests. While comparatively speaking, Russia's outreach is not as wide reaching as China's, Russia remains a key arms supplier for many African militaries. Russia's efforts and influence are further expanded through the presence of Russian professional military companies (PMCs) in several African countries, including supporting combat operations in Libya and the Central African Republic.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the efficacy of the current United States strategy to compete against Russia and China to be the security partner of choice in Africa?

*Answer.* I understand the United States strategy takes a practical approach to tailoring our outreach in Africa to ensure we are aligned not just in countering competitors, but also in meeting broader United States goals across the region. Key to our success is focusing on our by, with, and through approach and working with partners to meet the security challenges they face. The Department's efforts should be aligned with our interagency partners to help our African partners build capacity, improve transparency, and develop institutions that support sustainable security solutions. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to refine and improve these efforts.

*Question.* What metrics do you believe should be used to assess progress in this regard?

*Answer.* I recommend that the Department work closely in consultation with other United States departments and agencies to develop global metrics rather than regarding this issue as one unique to Africa. If confirmed, I look forward to helping shape that effort moving forward.

#### SOMALIA

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current security situation in Somalia?

*Answer.* Though al-Shabaab has been degraded significantly, we recognize that violent extremist organizations (VEOs) remain a threat to Somalia and the region. It is important that VEO influence is reduced and their operations disrupted so they can no longer threaten innocent Somalis, their neighbors, or United States and international allies' and partners' interests in the region and at home. Recently, Somalia has also faced growing insecurity due to the conflict in neighboring Ethiopia and delays in Somalia's domestic electoral processes.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the current United States strategy and objectives in Somalia?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that the key to our approach in Somalia is to work by, with, and through our partners to achieve stability and security. Our support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army (SNA) focuses on building partner nation institutions and capabilities that can provide for long-term security. We assist our partners to counter direct terrorist threats to the U.S. Homeland and U.S. personnel.

*Question.* Do you believe the defense lines of effort in the current strategy can be successfully achieved with the vast majority of United States Forces deployed external to Somalia?

*Answer.* I know the Department of Defense routinely reviews its military presence globally to ensure alignment with stated priorities. If confirmed, I would review United States objectives in Somalia and engage in discussions with Departmental leadership regarding whether the repositioning of United States personnel and assets in neighboring countries is the most appropriate location to meet our objectives. Overall, our partner-centric, by, with, and through, strategy has always been at the core of the mission, and by helping our partners strengthen defensive capabilities

to counter shared threats to stabilize the region, there may be an opportunity to help create political and economic development.

## LIBYA

*Question.* What is your assessment of current United States national security interests in Libya?

*Answer.* I understand that United States national security interests in Libya include support to the continued political reconciliation in Libya for a unified, democratic, and sovereign government; encouraging the removal of destabilizing foreign actors from Libya who undermine peace and threaten United States and NATO security in the Mediterranean and North Africa; and retaining our ability to monitor and disrupt violent extremist groups in Libya.

*Question.* What is your assessment of external actors operating in Libya and where their objectives align and conflict with those of the United States?

*Answer.* I think the Department has seen how the operations of malign external actors, particularly private military companies (PMCs) and imported foreign fighters, in Libya threaten peace in the country and the region. The use of foreign proxy forces in Libya comes at great expense to the Libyan people and regional stability.

## WEST AFRICA AND THE SAHEL

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current security situation in West Africa and the Sahel and its impact on United States security interests?

*Answer.* Security continues to deteriorate in the Sahel as instability spreads and threatens coastal West Africa. Porous borders and lack of state legitimacy and presence across large swaths of territory provide an enabling environment for violent extremist organizations, particularly the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS) groups, and transitional criminal networks. The security situation in the Sahel also poses a vital national security risk for our European allies and partners. If confirmed, I will review the Department's current strategy in the Sahel and work closely with other United States departments and agencies to nest our counterterrorism efforts within broader governance, diplomatic, and development priorities.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the utility of support provided by the United States to regional and external partners operating in the region in supporting U.S. security objectives in the region, particularly support provided pursuant to section 331 of title 10, United States Code?

*Answer.* One of the significant contributions to external partners in the region is logistical and intelligence support to enable French counterterrorism operations in the Sahel. I understand that our support in the region is effective and directly enables French operations against JNIM and ISIS-GS. This support provides vital capabilities for our partners to achieve shared counterterrorism objectives. This support complements the Department's bilateral support to African partners to train, equip, and professionalize their security forces. If confirmed, I will assess support and resourcing to ensure it aligns with our national security objectives for the region.

## WESTERN HEMISPHERE

*Question.* What should be the Department's strategic priorities in the Western Hemisphere?

*Answer.* A peaceful and prosperous Western Hemisphere is essential to the security of the United States. The Department's priorities will be informed by the President's national security strategy. I believe these priorities should address the malign influence of China and Russia and support cooperative efforts with our partners to mitigate insecurity in the region.

*Question.* Is the Department appropriately resourced to support these priorities?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will assess and advise the Secretary on the resources required to support the Department's priorities in the region. If confirmed, I also will seek to ensure these efforts are prioritized effectively and reflect the Secretary's broader objectives.

*Question.* If not, where do you assess the Department is accepting the greatest risk?

*Answer.* I expect that limitations on resources available to the Department will necessarily require tradeoffs and result in some level of risk. In the Western Hemisphere, I would be concerned about accepting risks that could result in region-wide instability or accepting risks that enable China or Russia to increase their ability to threaten the United States or constrain our actions.

*Question.* If confirmed, what recommendations would you make to the President and Secretary of Defense to deter Russian, Cuban, and Chinese influence in the United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) AOR and do you think these influences threaten hemispheric security and prosperity?

*Answer.* Russian, Cuban, and Chinese influences do threaten hemispheric security and prosperity. If confirmed, I would recommend to the President and Secretary that we counter these influences through a whole-of-government approach and robust engagements with our partners in the region, promoting the values of democracy, respect for human rights, and cooperation in a rules-based international order.

#### LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

*Question.* Many of the internal security challenges in Latin America are associated with transnational criminal networks.

What types of United States assistance are appropriate for Latin American countries given that these challenges emanate from non-state actors?

*Answer.* Transnational criminal networks are a cause of insecurity in Latin America and contribute to challenges in the United States. The Department of Defense can support a whole-of-government effort to disrupt these networks' activities and help our partners advance defense institution building, military professionalization, respect for human rights, and regional cooperation.

#### VENEZUELA

*Question.* What is your assessment of the current situation in Venezuela?

*Answer.* The greatest threat to Venezuela's peace and prosperity is the Maduro dictatorship. He and his inner circle have dismantled Venezuelan democracy, as they plunder the country's natural resources to enrich themselves, and caused the grave humanitarian crisis facing the country, which also has destabilized the region.

*Question.* What is your assessment of the role and objectives of external actors in Venezuela, particularly Russia, Cuba, Iran, and China?

*Answer.* I believe that external actors in Venezuela have enabled the Maduro dictatorship to remain in power by providing diplomatic, intelligence, financial, and military support.

*Question.* If confirmed, what would be your policy recommendations on how the Department should address Venezuela?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will advocate for a whole-of-government (that includes DOD) and multilateral approach to address the problems in Venezuela and encourage a peaceful, democratic transition. I would expect any DOD actions will be in support of a broader United States Government strategy to encourage the Maduro regime to hold free and fair elections and transition power peacefully.

#### COLOMBIA

Plan Colombia has enabled the Colombian Government to make significant gains against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and other paramilitary forces in Colombia. Additionally, Colombia has become a security exporter in the region due to its advances in capabilities and professionalism.

*Question.* What are your views regarding: (1) the current military and political situation in Colombia; and (2) the effectiveness and sustainability of ongoing DOD programs in Colombia?

*Answer.* The Colombian military is one of the most willing and capable strategic partners in Latin America, and the only country in the region that is a NATO Global Partner. Colombia is often held up as a model of how DOD's security cooperation programs can most effectively help build capacity and professionalize militaries. I believe that DOD programs support Colombia's significant investments in its defense establishment.

*Question.* Does the Department require any additional capabilities or legal authorities in Colombia, given developments in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would look into how the Department is supporting Department of State-led efforts regarding disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, and make recommendations for any required additional capabilities or authorities to the Secretary.

*Question.* Are there lessons to be learned from Plan Colombia that may be useful in addressing security and governance challenges elsewhere in the region and beyond?

*Answer.* I believe that the success of Plan Colombia can be attributed to four main factors: (1) It had overwhelming bipartisan support; (2) it was a whole-of-government effort, and interagency partners collaborated effectively to deliver results; (3)

it was sustained year-over-year with predictable funding; and (4) most importantly, the Government of Colombia played a strong leadership role, was committed to the plan, and provided the majority of the funding.

## CUBA

*Question.* What is your assessment of Cuba's activities and objectives in the Western Hemisphere?

*Answer.* Cuba continues to seek ways to extend its political, economic, and security influence in Latin America and the Caribbean in ways that counter the values we share with partners in the region.

*Question.* Under what circumstances, if any, would you recommend modifications to the security relationship between the United States and Cuba?

*Answer.* I believe the Cuban regime's continued suppression of the rights of the Cuban people and its continued support of the Maduro regime in Venezuela are factors that must be carefully considered prior to modifying this security relationship. It is important that the United States military maintain the longstanding limited contact on practical and routine issues at the Guantanamo Naval Station and between the United States Coast Guard and its counterparts.

## ARCTIC

*Question.* What changes, if any, are necessary for the United States to implement the June 2019 Arctic Strategy and does the United States have the appropriate capabilities and assets to meet its goals in the Arctic?

*Answer.* I understand that the Department has identified capability needs associated with implementing the Arctic Strategy, such as improved domain awareness and communications capabilities. If confirmed, I am committed to helping ensure that DOD has the appropriate concepts, capabilities, and relationships to advance defense objectives in the Arctic. DOD will continue to balance consideration of investments for the Arctic region with broader requirements placed upon the Joint Force, as detailed in the National Defense Strategy and other strategic guidance documents.

*Question.* What threat, if any, do Russian and Chinese activities in the Arctic pose to United States interests?

*Answer.* The Arctic is a region of increasing competition with China and Russia spurred in part by climate change. These competitors pose different challenges in the Arctic. Russia approaches the Arctic largely from a territorial defense perspective, including by restricting freedom of navigation along its coast, recapitalizing its Arctic military bases, and establishing a new Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command. It is advancing its interests through an increase in Arctic-based forces, which are intended to improve its operational capability in northern latitudes and to exert greater control of the Northern Sea Route. China is focused on increasing its influence in the region, primarily through predatory economic behavior and non-transparent research efforts.

*Question.* To what extent should our partners in the Arctic share the burden of countering Russia and China where those two competitors threaten shared security interests?

*Answer.* The United States' allies and partners are key to maintaining the international rules-based order and competing with Russia and China. This remains true in the Arctic, where one of the pillars of the DOD Arctic Strategy is strengthening the rules-based order through cooperation with allies and partners. DOD maintains strong cooperation with allies and partners in the Arctic in areas such as maritime surveillance, rotational deployments to Arctic locations, and United States-Canada binational defense efforts through the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD). This defense cooperation complements broader United States Government efforts to enhance Arctic cooperation on shared issues, such as fisheries management, search and rescue, and scientific research.

*Question.* What, in your view, are United States defense interests in the Arctic region?

*Answer.* In my view, United States defense interests in the Arctic region include: defense of the Homeland; deterring strategic competitors from undertaking malign or coercive activities in the region; and ensuring that common domains remain free and open in accord with international law. If confirmed, I will help ensure DOD supports broader U.S. Government efforts and works by, with, and through our allies, partners, indigenous communities, and other key stakeholders as appropriate.

*Question.* Do you believe that United States naval access in partner nations' Arctic ports are sufficient to achieve United States defense interests in the Arctic region?

Answer. I understand that DOD is concluding an examination of whether there is a need for a strategic port or ports in the Arctic, pursuant to Section 1752 of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2020, "Department of Defense Designation of Strategic Arctic Ports." If confirmed, I will help ensure that Secretary Austin's decision on Arctic ports is informed by a range of strategic, political-military, operational, and fiscal considerations, including United States naval access to ally and partner nations' Arctic ports.

#### DEFENSE SUPPORT TO CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES

*Question.* What is the role of the Lead Federal Agency when DOD provides support to civilian authorities?

Answer. My understanding is that, consistent with the law and the National Response Framework, lead Federal agencies may request DOD support in their areas of responsibility, coordinate the execution of DOD support, and reimburse DOD for such support. At all times, however, DOD personnel operate under DOD command and control.

*Question.* In your view, are the procedures by which other Federal, State, and Local agencies request DOD support efficient and effective?

Answer. To the best of my knowledge, these procedures are well-documented and time-tested. Federal, State, and local agencies cooperate in developing plans and procedures to respond to incidents and protect special events, and they exercise together to test and refine these plans and procedures. If confirmed, I will have the opportunity to review these plans and procedures, evaluate whether they are efficient and effective, and determine how well DOD has incorporated lessons learned.

*Question.* In your view, are DOD procedures for evaluating and approving the provision of support requested by a civil authority efficient, effective, and timely?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review DOD's procedures for evaluating and approving support requested by a civil authority to ensure these contribute to the timeliness and effectiveness of DOD's support.

*Question.* What is your understanding of the factors that are considered in determining whether DOD will provide support to a civil authority?

Answer. I understand that, consistent with the law and DOD policy, DOD considers six factors: 1) does providing the requested support comply with law; 2) does the requested support involve the potential use of lethal force by or against DOD forces; 3) will providing the requested support pose an unacceptable risk to the safety of DOD forces; 4) will DOD be reimbursed for the support and what effect will providing the support have on the DOD budget; 5) will providing the requested support be appropriate and in DOD's interest; and 6) how will providing the requested support affect DOD's ability to perform its other primary missions.

*Question.* Are the procedures DOD employs to secure appropriate reimbursement for any support it provides to a civil authority efficient and effective, in your view?

Answer. It is my understanding that DOD Components providing DOD support are responsible for securing appropriate reimbursement for DOD support. If confirmed, I will work closely with the relevant DOD Components to ensure that the DOD's procedures are efficient, effective, and transparent.

*Question.* Under what conditions should DOD assist civil authorities in securing the southwest border, particularly by providing active duty forces?

Answer. Most importantly, DOD assistance must be consistent with the law. For instance, Congress has authorized DOD to provide certain types of support, such as the provision, maintenance, and operation of equipment, including by active-duty military personnel, for aerial reconnaissance and for the detection, monitoring, and communication of the movement of surface traffic outside of the geographic boundary of the United States and within the United States not to exceed 25 miles of the boundary if the initial detection occurred outside of the boundary. However, Congress also has prohibited DOD from providing certain types of support, such as support provided under Chapter 15 of Title 10, U.S. Code, that would require the direct participation by a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps in a search, seizure, arrest, or other similar activity unless participation in such activity by such member is otherwise authorized by law. Also critically important is the imperative that providing DOD assistance should not expose the readiness of the U.S. Armed Forces and the defense of our nation to unacceptable risks.

*Question.* What types of assistance in this context are inappropriate, in your view?

Answer. In my view, assistance that would be inconsistent with the law would be inappropriate. For example, for support provided under Chapter 15 of Title 10, U.S. Code, Congress has prohibited the direct participation by a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps in a search, seizure, arrest, or other similar activity unless participation in such activity by such member is otherwise author-

ized by law. Assistance that would expose the readiness of the U.S. Armed Forces and the defense of our nation to unacceptable risks would also be inappropriate. Finally, assistance that would be inconsistent with DOD policies would be inappropriate.

#### COVID-19

*Question.* What is your view of DOD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic? What aspects of it could be improved? What role do you envision for DOD in pandemic response moving forward?

*Answer.* The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to our nation. In the face of this tremendous challenge, Secretary Austin tasked DOD to work to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic and defend the force against COVID-19, while protecting our nation. DOD has an important but supporting role in our nation's fight against the pandemic. I understand DOD has been effective in this role, while also executing national defense missions around the world. DOD has provided unprecedented support—thousands of military and civilian personnel contributing expertise, equipment, and supplies to our nation's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, DOD is providing thousands of members of the Armed Forces to support Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State-run vaccination centers. If confirmed, I will support DOD's continuing efforts to rise to this challenge.

From what I understand, DOD has been very effective at providing essential support in our nation's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. As Secretary Austin made clear in his Day One message to the force, DOD must move further and faster to contribute to the Federal Government's efforts to counter the COVID-19 pandemic. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to help DOD provide the most effective support.

In my view, DOD should remain an important but supporting partner in a whole-of-government response to future pandemics. We have vast capabilities and resources that can be marshaled to help our nation detect, prevent if possible, and, if necessary, fight against the next pandemic. In parallel, those same contributions have the corresponding benefit of strengthening the health of the Joint Force, which is paramount in meeting mission requirements.

*Question.* Are there any types of support that the Department of Defense should not provide, in your view?

*Answer.* I believe DOD should not serve as the lead Federal agency or the lead Federal coordinating agency for pandemic response. These roles are best carried out by the Department of Health and Human Services and FEMA. DOD continues to harness its capabilities, resources, and personnel to provide support. Further, DOD should not provide support that supplants, rather than supplements, the fulfillment of responsibilities that by law belong to the States and other Federal departments and agencies.

*Question.* Is it advisable, in your view, for DOD to play a significant role in the production and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines? What, if anything, can be done to enhance DOD's role and expedite the distribution and administration of vaccines?

*Answer.* I assess that DOD's partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services has been effective in accelerating the development, production, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for our nation. DOD's support to this effort was critical.

From what I understand, DOD continues to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to accelerate the manufacture of vaccines; is working with FEMA regarding the use of National Guard personnel to help States and territories distribute and administer vaccines; and is working closely with FEMA and the States to provide direct support to existing State-run vaccination centers and new FEMA Federally supported, State-run vaccination centers. That collaboration should continue as long as DOD is able to execute this and all of its missions, and until this pandemic is under control.

*Question.* To what extent does providing defense support to civil authorities during the coronavirus crisis impact readiness? How should DOD think about these tradeoffs?

*Answer.* As far as I can tell, DOD has met the demands of contingencies abroad and supported civil authorities responding to catastrophes at home simultaneously and successfully. I am not in a position to assess any impact on readiness, but, if confirmed, I will examine this issue to ensure that DOD is managing risks and balancing mission commitments effectively.

First and foremost, DOD's highest priority is, and should remain, the protection of our nation and its people. DOD cannot execute its mission risk-free, but DOD can mitigate and manage risks to ensure that DOD does not compromise the safety and security of our nation.

China, Russia and other nations are disseminating disinformation and false narratives relating to COVID-19, to advance their strategic interests.

*Question.* What role, if any, should the Department play in countering disinformation and false narratives relating to COVID-19?

*Answer.* In support of national efforts, DOD can work with partners and allies to counter efforts by foreign adversaries to spread disinformation and false narratives. DOD has a responsibility to personnel within the Department to communicate effectively to ensure its personnel have accurate information about COVID-19, force health protection measures, and facility protection measures.

*Question.* How has the COVID-19 crisis impacted U.S. plans and abilities to conduct joint training exercises with allies and what policy steps would you recommend, if confirmed, for mitigating these impacts?

*Answer.* It is my understanding that the COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on U.S. plans and the ability to conduct joint training exercises with allies and partners. If confirmed, I will work with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to understand the force health protection requirements associated with an exercise environment (and mitigation measures) and the impacts of training delays, and to identify an appropriate way forward that addresses force health protection and mission readiness.

#### CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

*Question.* The NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017 included provisions designed to enhance the oversight and advocacy of special operations forces. Among other things, these reforms established an administrative chain of command from the Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command through the ASD(SOLIC) to the Secretary of Defense, mirroring the relationship between the Secretaries of the Military Departments and their Service Chiefs.

What is your understanding of the "service secretary-like" responsibilities of the ASD(SOLIC) for special operations forces?

*Answer.* I understand that the ASD(SO/LIC) reports directly to the Secretary of Defense on these "service secretary-like" matters, consistent with Section 167(f) of Title 10. The ASD(SO/LIC) exercises authority, direction, and control regarding special operations-peculiar administration and support of USSOCOM, including, but not limited to, the readiness and organization of special operations forces and civilian personnel.

*Question.* If confirmed, what actions would you take to affirm the independent role of the ASD(SOLIC) as the "service secretary-like" civilian for special operations forces?

*Answer.* I understand that the ASD(SO/LIC) is immediately subordinate to the Secretary of Defense for the oversight of special operations-peculiar administrative matters. Title 10 is clear that the administrative chain of command runs from the Secretary of Defense to the ASD(SO/LIC) to the Commander, USSOCOM. Also, Section 902 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021 states that "no officer below the Secretary may intervene to exercise authority, direction, or control over the Assistant Secretary in the discharge of such responsibilities." If confirmed, I will comply with the law and support the Secretary of Defense's organizational decisions.

*Question.* In your view, how should these responsibilities be balanced with other ASD(SOLIC) responsibilities related to policy and operational issues?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with the ASD(SO/LIC) to ensure that the office of the ASD(SO/LIC) is appropriately supported and empowered to fulfill the ASD(SO/LIC)'s principal responsibilities, including the overall supervision of special operations activities, administering and leading the special operations administrative chain of command, and assisting the USD(Policy) in developing overall policy pertaining to special operations, counterterrorism, and irregular warfare.

In a November 18, 2020, memorandum, then-Acting Secretary of Defense Miller established the ASD(SOLIC) as a direct report to the Secretary for policy responsibilities, as well as for their "service secretary-like" responsibilities for "special-operations peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces."

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you ensure that policy advice and recommendations relating to the employment of special operations forces is fully integrated with that provided by the Office of the USD(P)?



Answer. Title 10 is clear that the ASD(SO/LIC) is a direct report to the Secretary of Defense in its “service secretary-like” role; it is also clear that the ASD(SO/LIC) assists the USD(Policy) in developing and supervising overall DOD policy, program planning, execution, and allocation and use of resources pertaining to special operations activities identified in 10 USC 167(k), combating terrorism, and irregular warfare. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks to ensure the integration of policy advice and recommendations relating to employment of special operations forces, and ensure the optimal organizational structure to accomplish those goals.

*Question.* How do you differentiate the ASD(SO/LIC)’s policy responsibilities from their “service secretary-like” responsibilities for “special-operations peculiar administrative matters relating to the organization, training, and equipping of special operations forces”?

Answer. Title 10, Section 138, prescribes distinct roles for ASD(SO/LIC), including the overall supervision (including oversight of policy and resources) of special operations activities, acting as the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations matters, and assisting the USD(P) in developing and supervising overall DOD policy, program planning, execution, and allocation and use of resources pertaining to irregular warfare, combating terrorism, and special operations activities identified in 10 USC 167(k). Under 10 USC 167(f), the ASD(SO/LIC) exercises authority, direction, and control with respect to special operations-peculiar administrative matters and support of USSOCOM, including, but not limited to, the readiness and organization of special operations forces, resources and equipment, and civilian personnel. The latter is akin to the responsibilities of a Military Department Secretary in providing civilian oversight of, and civilian leadership and management for, the Military Department under the Military Department Secretary’s cognizance.

#### PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS (SHA)

*Question.* What should be the Department’s role and objectives in supporting global peacekeeping operations?

Answer. I understand the United States is the largest overall financial contributor to the United Nations’ peacekeeping budget in support of global peacekeeping operations. DOD provides support to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in the Sinai for the continued implementation of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel and assists the Department of State in execution of its Global Peace Operations Initiative. If confirmed, I will review this DOD support to global peacekeeping operations to see if any changes should be made.

*Question.* Should the U.S. contribute military personnel to both staff positions and military observers in support of U.N. peacekeeping operations?

Answer. I understand the United States provides military personnel in support of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations as military observers. If confirmed, I will work to understand more about this issue and assess whether DOD should consider supporting UN requests for U.S. military personnel to serve in peacekeeping operations.

#### VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

*Question.* Despite considerable global investment in the counterterrorism fight, jihadists in dozens of groups and countries continue to pose credible threats to local and regional United States interests.

What is your assessment of the threat to United States interests posed by al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and their affiliates and adherents?

Answer. Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and their affiliates continue to pose a threat to United States interests around the globe, even as persistent pressure from the United States and our allies and partners has helped prevent these groups from attacking the U.S. Homeland. These groups continue to present localized and regional insurgent threats to our partners; seek to destabilize societies through violence; and will continue to threaten U.S. citizens and U.S. interests. As these groups and their networks have become more decentralized, they increasingly have turned to a strategy of proliferating their radical ideologies online, seeking to motivate their adherents to violence from within the borders of our allies and partners.

*Question.* Which group, in your view, presents the greatest threat to the United States?

Answer. Although al Qaeda and its affiliates continue to harbor designs to strike the United States, ISIS has shown itself particularly adaptive despite massive international pressure; I would be most concerned that a reduction of that pressure would allow ISIS to reconstitute its capabilities to strike Americans relatively quick-

ly. Should I be confirmed, I will aim to continue to empower our global coalition of partners and the whole-of-government approach within the U.S. Government and the governments of our partners. These efforts collectively have decimated both groups and their associated networks and are critical to preventing their resurgence.

*Question.* If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and DOD's role in supporting it? What condition-based metrics would you apply to measure the effectiveness of the strategy?

*Answer.* For years, the U.S. counterterrorism strategy has been an effective, whole-of-government approach to integrating military and non-military efforts, calibrated to varied threats and the regional context in which they exist. DOD has long been a cornerstone of that strategy, drawing on kinetic and non-kinetic capabilities, and often enabling the capabilities of other departments and agencies and foreign partners. I am particularly focused on determining how we can continue to disrupt threats to the United States and our partners from groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda while working to position the United States to be successful against other global threats we face. If confirmed, I look forward to working across the Department, with my counterparts in other departments and agencies, and with our international partners to ensure we remain successful in executing our counterterrorism strategy, even as we take on additional strategic goals.

The most important metric identifies whether the security of the United States—our people, our Homeland, and our interests—is improved by the implementation of our strategy. A key criterion for making such an assessment is whether our partners, who increasingly are in the lead with our support, are becoming more capable of degrading these threats in a sustainable manner.

*Question.* Do you believe there needs to be a “more resource sustainable” approach to counterterrorism, as directed by the 2018 NDS? If so, and if confirmed, what specific actions would you take to promote a “more resource sustainable” approach and how would you assess any risks associated with such an approach?

*Answer.* I believe that a “resource-sustainable” approach is necessary in addressing all our global challenges, including counterterrorism, as we confront an increasingly complicated global environment requiring the United States to calibrate our resources, expenditures, and investments to make progress in addressing the range of threats we face.

If confirmed, I would look to align the Department's efforts with broader U.S. policy objectives and desired end-states. To be successful in achieving our strategic goals, I intend, if confirmed, to work with the Secretary and Deputy Secretary to prioritize how the Department applies its resources, expenditures, and investments in an optimal combination. To ensure we are striking that right balance, we will need to exercise regularly and evaluate the approach to ensure we are managing risk in the best possible manner.

*Question.* Should the Department focus principally on terrorist organizations that pose a direct threat to the U.S. Homeland? If so, how would you mitigate risk posed by other terrorist groups that have such intent but currently lack the capability to do so?

*Answer.* In my opinion, the Department should prioritize our efforts and resources in such a way that terrorist organizations, especially those that possess the intent and capability to attack the U.S. Homeland and our interests, are unable to do so.

We can mitigate risk through collaboration with partners and allies in addressing a wide range of challenges. Intelligence and information sharing mechanisms provide an important means to identify issues and threats, to share awareness rapidly, and to respond to threats as they develop. To that end, the Department should continue to work with international and interagency partners to maintain awareness of emerging threats from terrorist groups that have the intent, but not yet the capability, to attack the U.S. Homeland.

In May 2013, President Obama gave a speech at the National Defense University regarding counterterrorism operations and related legal and policy frameworks for the use of force. According to a White House fact sheet, the President indicated a “preference” that the use of force in “active warzones, and beyond” should be carried out by the U.S. military. Furthermore, in a background briefing with reporters, a senior administration official stated “the United States military is the appropriate agency to use force outside of active warzones, given their traditional role and given the transparency [that] can be associated with actions by the United States military.”

*Question.* Do you believe that, absent extraordinary circumstances, the military is the appropriate organization to carry out counterterrorism operations involving the use of force?

*Answer.* I agree that, absent extraordinary circumstances, the U.S. military is the appropriate organization to carry out counterterrorism operations involving the use

of force. The Department of Defense should not, however, address terrorist threats unilaterally, and all DOD activities must be correlated with and complementary to a U.S. Government-wide response. The Department must also work with our allies and partners—another key pillar of the current National Defense Strategy—to leverage their regional expertise and unique capabilities.

*Question.* In your view, how important is public transparency regarding counterterrorism operations and issues related to the use of force?

*Answer.* In my view, public transparency regarding U.S. military counterterrorism operations, including those related to the use of force, is vitally important. If confirmed, I will continue to advocate for transparency in our operations. I am confident we can strike the right balance between transparency regarding counterterrorism operations and our duty to protect our forces and our partners who conduct these operations.

The Obama Administration publicly released a redacted version of its Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG) outlining procedures for approving direct action against terrorist targets located outside the United States and areas of active hostilities.

*Question.* Do you believe an appropriately redacted version of successor guidance to the PPG should be publicly released?

*Answer.* The PPG and any successor guidance are Presidential guidance. As such, I would defer such decisions to the National Security Advisor and staff. If confirmed, I would advocate for transparency in the principles and standards that undergird our operations to ensure the American people understand what guides us in safeguarding them from terrorist threats outside of the United States.

*Question.* Will you commit to releasing this successor guidance within 90 days of your confirmation?

*Answer.* Because it is Presidential guidance, I would defer such decisions on successor guidance to the National Security Advisor and staff.

#### SECTION 127E AND SECTION 1202 ACTIVITIES

*Question.* Section 127e of title 10, U.S. Code, authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide support (including training, funding, and equipment) to forces and individuals supporting or facilitating military operations for the purpose of combating terrorism.

*Answer.* Section 1202 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2018 authorizes U.S. special operations forces to provide support (including training, funding, and equipment) to forces and individuals supporting or facilitating irregular warfare operations.

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

*Answer.* In my past experience, authorities such as these are cost-effective ways for the United States to advance our security interests by supporting and enabling partners and allies in pursuing shared objectives. If confirmed, I will evaluate these authorities, including how they are supporting U.S. strategic goals, and ensure the activities conducted under these authorities are in alignment with NDS priorities.

*Question.* If confirmed, what criteria would you use to evaluate proposals for the use of each of these authorities, particularly with respect to mitigating the risks associated with conducting irregular warfare activities below the level of traditional armed conflict?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will review the authorities and all operations currently ongoing to ensure they meet U.S. national security objectives, are aligned with NDS priorities, support Combatant Commander needs, are appropriately scoped, and remain good returns on investment. I will ensure that all stakeholders are consulted, and I look forward to working with Congress, including Congress's oversight of these unique authorities and missions.

#### COUNTERNARCOTICS AND COUNTER-TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME ACTIVITIES (CNGT)

*Question.* What should be the role of the Department in combating narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime?

*Answer.* I understand that DOD, in support of interagency and international law enforcement partners, executes its statutory mission to detect and monitor the aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs bound for the United States. DOD provides expertise and capabilities that help law enforcement partners reduce the flow of illicit drugs, degrade the ability of drug trafficking organizations, and disrupt transnational criminal organizations that threaten U.S. national security. If confirmed, I will evaluate whether DOD's resources are used appropriately in this area.

*Question.* If confirmed, how would you prioritize the Department's allocation of resources to combat narcotics trafficking and transnational organized crime?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review DOD's counterdrug activities, resources, and approach to prioritization to determine whether adjustments are appropriate.

#### COUNTER THREAT FINANCE (CNGT)

*Question.* What should be the Department's role in counter-threat finance activities?

Answer. I understand that DOD provides expertise and analytical capabilities that help enable other U.S. Government departments and agencies disrupt terrorist and transnational criminal finance activities that threaten U.S. national security. I believe counter-threat finance is an important capability that helps the U.S. Government degrade the capabilities of its adversaries by denying and disrupting their revenues. If confirmed, I will review these activities to ensure that DOD is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and employing its counter-threat finance resources against priority threats.

*Question.* In your view, should the Department expand its support to other U.S. Government departments and agencies conducting counter threat finance activities? If so, how?

Answer. I do not know the extent of DOD's support to other U.S. Government departments and agencies conducting counter-threat finance activities. If confirmed, I will review the support DOD provides and make adjustments as necessary to execute the USD(P) responsibility to develop and oversee DOD counter-threat finance activities and capabilities. If confirmed, I will review the support that DOD provides and make adjustments as necessary.

#### IRREGULAR WARFARE

*Question.* Nation states are becoming more aggressive in challenging U.S. interests through the use of asymmetric means that often fall below the threshold of traditional armed conflict, commonly referred to as irregular warfare or "gray zone operations."

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

Answer. I see adversaries increasingly turning to irregular warfare tactics to advance their objectives because the United States maintains significant conventional military advantages, but has not always been as militarily successful in the "gray zone" or in applying statecraft against adversaries operating in the gray zone. Although the Department acts largely in a supporting role to other U.S. Government partners in addressing challenges that fall beneath the threshold of traditional armed conflict, I assess that DOD cannot depend only on its conventional military advantages and deterrent capability as its contribution to combating adversaries in the gray zone. If confirmed, I would look to ensure the Department is supporting all U.S. Government efforts to defeat threats posed by adversaries and to maintain military and political advantages.

*Question.* What should be the guiding principles of any DOD strategy to counter threats in the "gray zone," in your view?

Answer. I understand the Department has developed an Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy that guides the Department in countering "gray zone" or irregular threats. I also understand that this guidance places particular emphasis on the multi-domain environment and on the importance of a unified effort within the U.S. Government and with U.S. allies and partners. Gray zone competition is complex and multi-faceted, and it requires a proactive and creative application of Department capabilities coordinated with complementary toolsets of other U.S. departments and agencies.

#### INFORMATION OPERATIONS

*Question.* What is your assessment of DOD's ability to conduct effective military operations in the information environment to defend U.S. interests against malign influence activities carried out by state and non-state actors?

Answer. I understand the Department has a variety of capabilities to conduct military operations in the information environment, including public affairs (PA), Military Information Support Operations (MISO), Electro-Magnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO), and cyberspace operations. When these activities are executed effectively and in combination with each other and other tools, DOD can achieve its mission more affordably, with reduced risk to our operating forces. If confirmed, I will strive to integrate these capabilities further into Department activities and into our support to our interagency and foreign partners.

*Question.* Are DOD's efforts in this regard appropriately integrated with other U.S. Government organizations and activities?

Answer. Department efforts throughout the information environment should cross traditional department and agency lines. If confirmed, I will evaluate the integration of the Department's organization and activities in the information environment to ensure we are bolstering collective U.S. Government efforts toward meeting our strategic national goals.

*Question.* Does DOD have sufficient authorities and resources to conduct these operations effectively? If not, what additional authorities and resources would you request, if confirmed?

Answer. I am not aware of a need for new authorities or resources, but will need to evaluate this question with the benefit of experts in the Department, if confirmed. I am aware of a requirement for a posture review in conjunction with the statutory direction to establish a Principal Information Operations Advisor; I expect that review would inform my evaluation of authorities, resource availability and allocation, and strategic alignment.

If confirmed, I look forward to understanding our current authorities and resources more fully before making an assessment of what additional resources and authorities, if any, need to be requested.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ROLE IN ELECTION SECURITY

*Question.* In September 2019, at the annual National Cybersecurity Summit, then Secretary of Defense Esper noted that "our adversaries will continue to target our democratic processes", the Pentagon had "developed our capabilities and increased our capacity to allow us to detect, locate, and exploit threats in the cyber domain", and that "influence operations are at a scope and scale never before imagined." In that same speech, Secretary Esper declared election security "an enduring mission for the Department of Defense."

Do you agree with Secretary Esper's assessment regarding the continuing threat to our democratic processes from foreign malign influence operations?

Answer. Our adversaries rightly view our democratic system as a source of strength and resilience, and that makes it an attractive target for efforts to divide and destabilize us. The FBI leads the U.S. Government's efforts to counter malign influence operations, but if confirmed, I intend to continue the Department's supporting role as a part of a whole-of-government effort to defend our democratic processes from those operations.

*Question.* Do you envision election security as an enduring mission for the Department?

Answer. Civilian leadership of the electoral process is paramount, and within a whole-of-government effort, the Department of Defense has a role to play defending those elections from foreign interference. It is my understanding that, operating outside the United States, DOD generates insights that enable the defense of our elections and, when appropriate, conducts cyber operations to that same end. DOD also can provide Defense Support of Civil Authorities upon request and in accordance with applicable law. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department is postured to continue playing this important role in defense of our elections.

*Question.* If so, how would OUSD(P) best support the mission of defending our democratic processes from interference by Russia and other foreign adversaries?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department continues to generate insights that enable defense against foreign interference and, when necessary, prepares to act against the malign actors conducting such interference.

*Question.* Do you assess that our actions to date are deterring Russian President Putin or other foreign adversaries that seek to interfere in our elections? If not, are there additional policy steps that you believe the Department of Defense should take to enhance deterrence of foreign election interference?

Answer. It is impossible to say for certain whether certain actions have been successful at changing the decision-making processes of President Putin or other malign actors. My understanding is that whole-of-government efforts to impose costs on President Putin's government for its attempted interference in the 2016 election, and subsequent efforts by United States Cyber Command and others to disrupt and degrade malicious cyber infrastructure, have been significant. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency asserted in November that the 2020 elections were the most secure in history, and I have no reason to believe otherwise. If confirmed, I intend to continue the Department's proactive efforts—as a part of a whole-of-government approach—to defend our elections.

#### DEFENSE SECURITY COOPERATION (DSCA)

*Question.* In your view, what should be the role of the Department's security cooperation activities in the implementation of U.S. security strategy?

**Answer.** The Defense Department's role fits into the whole-of-government approach to bolstering our allies and partners. DOD security cooperation activities should enhance the capabilities and capacity of our partners to provide for their own defense, address regional security challenges to advance shared security interests, and strengthen relationships that promote U.S. security interests. In coordination with the Department of State, the Department of Defense's security cooperation tools are critical to strengthening and leveraging the United States' robust network of alliances and partnerships, which is foundational to U.S. defense strategic objectives.

**Question.** If confirmed, how would you define the fundamental objectives of the Department's programs and activities for building the capabilities of foreign security forces? What changes, if any, would you recommend to the Department's approach?

**Answer.** The fundamental objective of DOD security cooperation activities is to advance our ally and partner defense postures to address shared security threats. Through building partner capacity, our partners can operate effectively alongside and in lieu of U.S. Forces to address shared security challenges in support of U.S. interests.

It is my understanding that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has made significant progress in recent years to align security cooperation activities more closely with National Defense Strategy (NDS) objectives. If confirmed, I plan to review the strategic prioritization of DOD security cooperation resources and existing planning processes to ensure these activities advance defense strategic objectives and earn the United States a return on its investments.

**Question.** Is the OUSD(P) appropriately organized and empowered to fulfill its responsibilities for the oversight of strategic policy and guidance and the overall allocation of resources for security cooperation programs and activities of the Department of Defense pursuant to section 382 of title 10, United States Code? What changes, if any, to OUSD(P) structure, authorities, and resourcing for these purposes, would you recommend, if confirmed?

**Answer.** I understand that the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, as delegated by the Secretary of Defense, has the responsibility for oversight of strategic policy and guidance and responsibility for overall resource allocation for security cooperation programs and activities of the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I will review the Department's current approach to the strategic oversight and resource allocation of security cooperation activities and assess whether the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is appropriately organized and empowered to perform its strategic oversight role of the security cooperation enterprise.

If confirmed, I will communicate to the Committee any additional organizational, legislative, or resource adjustments that I assess are necessary to exercise the responsibility for strategic oversight, guidance, and allocation of Department of Defense security cooperation resources.

**Question.** In your view, what should be the role of the Department of Defense, vis-à-vis the Department of State and other civilian departments and agencies, in efforts to build the capabilities of foreign security forces? What is your assessment of the current level of coordination between the Department of Defense and Department of State on security cooperation?

**Answer.** The Department of Defense advises the Department of State regarding desired partner and ally military requirements, consistent with U.S. national security policy. The Department of Defense implements the Foreign Military Sales program and certain Department of State security assistance programs, consistent with State Department guidance; and coordinates with the Department of State regarding Department of Defense security sector assistance programs. I understand—and if confirmed, would affirm—the importance of ensuring DOD activities align with broader U.S. foreign policy, thorough coordination, collaboration, and consistent engagement with the State Department and other interagency partners.

I understand that the Department of Defense and the Department of State coordinate well on security sector assistance activities through formal coordination forums and regular, informal engagements.

**Question.** If confirmed, what would be your relationship with the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)? On what issues would you expect to consult with the Director?

**Answer.** The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is responsible for exercising authority, direction, and control over the Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA). If confirmed, I expect to consult with the Director, DSCA, to provide the Secretary with advice and recommendations on security cooperation issues facing the Department, including partner and ally capability development strategies; Foreign Military Sales; DSCA-managed security sector assistance programs; and Security Cooperation Workforce development.

## CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

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

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

*Answer.* Making public information about U.S. military operations, including the results of DOD's assessments of civilian casualty incidents, helps improve the public's understanding of U.S. military operations. Although operational and security necessities constrain what can be publicly released, transparency efforts can help the public better understand the suffering that results from war as well as the U.S. military's efforts to reduce that suffering to the greatest extent possible. I understand that the Department currently makes public information about its efforts to reduce the risk of civilian casualties. I also know that the Combatant Commands that are engaged in operations periodically release information about civilian casualty incidents and their assessments of reports of civilian casualties, and that the Department prepares an annual report on civilian casualties that have resulted from U.S. military operations, pursuant to statutory requirements. I strongly support such transparency efforts.

*Question.* Do you believe the Department of Defense has achieved a sufficient level of transparency on such matters? If not, what additional steps do you believe are necessary?

*Answer.* I understand the Department is continuing to consider ways to improve its communications with the public on these issues, even as it is developing a new DOD-level policy document on civilian casualty mitigation and response. For example, last October, the Department established a webpage highlighting how members of the public can communicate information about civilian casualties that may have resulted from U.S. military operations to relevant Geographic Combatant Commands. If confirmed, I will consider ways that the Department can improve its communication with the public on these issues, including by considering how this instruction can support these transparency efforts.

## USE OF MILITARY FORCE

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

*Answer.* The Department has operated under the current legal authorities for nearly 20 years, but the threats we face continue to evolve. If confirmed, I intend to work closely with the Department of Defense General Counsel to evaluate current legal authorities to determine whether they are sufficient to enable the Department's counterterrorism and related missions.

*Question.* Is the 2002 AUMF still necessary and useful, in your view?

*Answer.* Should I be confirmed, I would recommend this authority be reassessed in the light of current circumstances, and I would advocate for changes or updates if they are deemed necessary.

*Question.* In your view, is a "new" authorization for the use of military force needed at this time? If so, what should be the scope and terms of this "new" AUMF? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* The Department has operated under the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs for nearly 20 years, even as new threat actors have emerged, and others have evolved. If confirmed, I believe it would be prudent to review these existing authorities and assess whether updated or further authorizations are required.

The scope or terms of any "new" authorization should be informed by an in-depth review of the current authorities, and by the facts and circumstances to which the authorities apply. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the Department's General Counsel to conduct that evaluation.

*Question.* What groups are currently assessed to be associated forces of al Qaeda for purposes of the 2001 AUMF, and in what countries are U.S. military direct action operations against such groups authorized?

*Answer.* The 2001 AUMF is the legal basis for currently authorized operations against the following groups or individuals: al Qaeda; the Taliban; certain other terrorist or insurgent groups affiliated with al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan; al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; al-Shabaab; al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); al Qaeda in Syria; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). I do not have updated information on the countries in which U.S. military direct action is currently authorized.

*Question.* What factors would you consider, if confirmed, in recommending to the Secretary of Defense which forces of other nations should be eligible for collective self-defense by U.S. military forces, and under what conditions?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would consider the degree to which collective self-defense would help achieve U.S. national security and specific mission objectives; bolster the protection of U.S. forces and facilities operating abroad; and help maintain the resolve of partners that U.S. forces work by, with, and through to address mutual threats, including commitments in mutual defense agreements. Also, rules of engagement authorizing U.S. forces to defend foreign partner forces should clearly identify the particular partners eligible for such collective self-defense. Any use of force in defense of foreign partner forces must be conducted in accordance with the law of armed conflict.

#### DETAINEE ISSUES (ODP)

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

*Answer.* Yes, I support the standards for detainee treatment in the Army Field Manual on Interrogations, FM 2-22.3, issued in September 2006, and in DOD Directive 2310.01E, DOD Detainee Program, dated August 19, 2014. Individuals in the custody and control of the U.S. Government may not be subjected to any interrogation technique that is not authorized by and listed in the Army Field Manual.

*Question.* What are your views on the long-term use of the detention facility at Guantanamo? Should use of the facility be terminated, as President Biden has indicated?

*Answer.* I believe that it is time to close the DOD detention facility at Guantanamo Bay responsibly. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Administration to develop a plan for the 40 detainees remaining at the facility. Until such time, the Department will continue to ensure safe and humane treatment of the detainee population.

*Question.* If the use of the facility should be terminated, what are the available options for disposition of the detainees held at Guantanamo and where should the 40 detainees in law of war detention at GTMO be detained?

*Answer.* It would be premature for me to speculate. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Administration and Congress to ensure the continued safe and humane treatment of the law of war detainees in the care of United States Forces at Guantanamo Bay.

*Question.* If the use of the facility should be terminated, what process would you expect to follow to bring detainee operations at GTMO to a close?

*Answer.* It would be premature for me to speculate. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Administration and Congress to ensure the continued safe and humane treatment of the law of war detainees in the care of United States Forces at Guantanamo Bay.

*Question.* If confirmed, would you ever advise the President to transfer new detainees to Guantanamo, and if so, under what criteria?

*Answer.* I would not advise the Secretary of Defense to transfer new detainees to Guantanamo.

*Question.* The Periodic Review Board (PRB) process enacted by section 1023 of the Fiscal Year 2012 NDAA "to determine whether certain individuals detained at [Guantanamo] represent a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States such that their continued detention is warranted" appears to be stalled. In your view, should the PRB process be continued or terminated? Please explain your answer.

*Answer.* If confirmed, I would support continuing the Periodic Review Board (PRB) process. I understand that the PRB process continues to conduct hearings on a regular basis.

*Question.* What are your views on the objectives and outcomes of the Department's Military Commission process?

*Answer.* I support the use of military commissions for the narrow purpose of prosecuting those accused of violations of the law of war.

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

*Question.* In responding to the 2018 DOD Civilian Employee Workplace and Gender Relations survey, approximately 17.7 percent of female and 5.8 percent of male DOD employees indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and/or gen-



der discrimination by “someone at work” in the 12 months prior to completing the survey.

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

Answer. The safety and security of our workforce are of utmost importance. If confirmed, and if I were to receive a complaint of sexual harassment or discrimination, I would first ensure that the complainant was in a safe place. I would work with the legal office, the human resources office, and the employee’s supervisory chain to support the employees concerned and appropriately resolve the complaint. Each member of the Policy workforce deserves a safe, healthy, and respectful place to work. If confirmed, I will communicate my expectation that this standard of respect be upheld, and that any allegations be addressed swiftly.

#### CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT

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

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

*Question.* Do you agree, without qualification, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided? Please answer with a simple yes or no.

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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

Answer. Yes.

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[Questions for the record with answers supplied follow:]

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

## CYBER WORKFORCE

1. Senator GILLIBRAND. Dr. Kahl, as cyber-security intrusions become more frequent, bolstering our military cyber defenses, especially our cyber personnel, must be a priority. It will be one of my priorities—along with others on this committee—to ensure that our cyber personnel reflect the high standards we need for our Nation's cybersecurity in this environment. What role can you play in ensuring that we recruit the highest standard of cyber personnel at the Department of Defense (DOD), and how do we avoid losing them to the private sector?

Dr. KAHL. The Department's success in cyberspace is inextricably linked to its ability to maintain a talented and professional cyber workforce. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Military Departments and Services to support the recruitment of uniformed military cyber professionals and the provision of world-class cyber training and education throughout their careers. I look forward to partnering with the DOD Chief Information Officer and the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness in their efforts to grow and strengthen the Department's civilian workforce, including through the expansion of the Cyber Excepted Service program, which affords the Department greater flexibility in hiring compensating and managing the careers of cyber professionals.

## QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

## CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY

2. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, what specific steps do you plan to take to strengthen civilian control of the military—and enact safeguards to ensure civilian voices are elevated within the Pentagon—if confirmed as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will work with Secretary Austin and Deputy Secretary Hicks to ensure the Department's civilian personnel are directly involved in the strategic, policy, operational, programmatic, and budgetary decisions. I will ensure the Policy team, with support and input from across the Office of the Secretary of Defense, maintains an independent channel to the Secretary. I will also forge relationships with my military counterparts in the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and Military Services to ensure close collaboration between our organizations, ensuring the Secretary benefits from both military advice and civilian expertise.

3. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, how do you envision your role in supporting Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and providing your guidance and expertise acquired through a civilian career as balance to his military knowledge?

Dr. KAHL. If I am confirmed, my role is to serve as the principal staff assistant and advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary for all matters on the formulation of national security and defense policy. I have extensive experience as a policy practitioner, including previous positions in the Department of Defense, and have conducted research and published on a wide array of foreign policy and defense policy topics. I will draw on this experience, as well as the knowledge from my staff and counterparts across the Office of the Secretary of Defense, to provide the best possible advice to our Department's leadership.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE AS NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT

4. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, what steps should the Department of Defense (DOD) be taking to swiftly respond to emerging nontraditional national security challenges, including global health and climate change issues?

Dr. KAHL. Emerging, “nontraditional” security challenges, such as global health and climate issues, pose unique risks to the U.S. Homeland and the U.S. Military, in addition to our allies and partners. As is clear in the interim National Security Strategic Guidance issued by President Biden last week, these threats must be met with collective action. If confirmed I would ensure the Department of Defense works closely with the Intelligence Community, other U.S. departments and agencies, and allies and partners to identify and mitigate the risks and threats these challenges pose and help ensure they are factored into our strategic planning, operations and investments.

5. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, what specific steps should we take to ensure that the Department of Defense and all of our military installations—at home and

abroad—are more resilient and capable of accomplishing their mission with less reliance on the local infrastructure?

Dr. KAHL. Various factors, ranging from the actions of foreign actors to climate-driven shocks and stresses, challenge DOD's ability to advance defense objectives and complicate the Department's ability to operate its installations efficiently and effectively at home and abroad. The Department must understand the threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities associated with operating its installations (at home and abroad) in steady-state and contingency situations; and identify ways to prevent, prepare for, and mitigate those factors. If confirmed, I will advocate within the Department for investments to protect critical infrastructure and installation resilience to ensure we can accomplish our missions.

#### SAUDI ARABIA

6. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, how would you ensure that any defense assistance to Saudi Arabia serves our strategic interests, as well as humanitarian interests?

Dr. KAHL. President Biden directed his Administration to prioritize U.S. values in the pursuit of protecting our strategic interests, including humanitarian interests and human rights. These inform the United States relationship with Saudi Arabia, including any United States assistance. The United States is prioritizing diplomacy and humanitarian assistance in its approach to the Yemen conflict, in which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Saudi-led Coalition play a key role. President Biden already has directed specific policy changes with respect to security cooperation and defense assistance to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that more effectively support United States strategic interests and elevate diplomacy as the path to end the conflict in Yemen. The Department of Defense will continue to support Saudi Arabia's ability to defend its territory and will encourage steps that align with United States interests, including deescalating regional tensions, promoting security, securing freedom of navigation, and countering the development of and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. If confirmed, I will lead my organization in continuing this important recalibration with Saudi Arabia.

#### MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT

7. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, how will you collaborate with and contribute to the new independent review commission on sexual assault in the military?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I would do all that I can to support efforts to address the scourge of sexual assault in the military, including directing my staff to provide the requested support to the new independent review commission. I will also direct my staff to collaborate with our legal team, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Director of Washington Headquarters Services, and senior leaders across the Military Departments and Services, to ensure we foster a safe environment for all personnel.

8. Senator BLUMENTHAL. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, what specific steps would you take to ensure that all servicemembers and Department of Defense civilian employees—regardless of service, rank, or role—experience a culture of respect, safety, and equality?

Dr. KAHL. All Department personnel deserve a safe, healthy, and respectful place to work. If confirmed, I will support and uphold all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives from the Secretary. I will also clearly communicate my expectations to the Policy workforce that no form of unlawful discrimination will be tolerated and that any allegations will be addressed swiftly. I would work closely with the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and the Department's legal team to ensure we are taking all appropriate steps to create a culture of respect, safety, and equality across our entire work force.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO

##### HOMELAND DEFENSE RADAR—HAWAII

9. Senator HIRONO. Dr. Kahl, the 2019 Missile Defense Review identified the Homeland Defense Radar—Hawaii (HDR-H) as a requirement for detecting and discriminating against inbound missile threats from an increasingly capable North Korea. Congress appropriated \$133 million for fiscal year 2021 to keep its development on track. Please provide your thoughts on HDR-H, particularly the importance of it as part of the area of responsibility's (AOR) layered missile defense sys-

tem to protect Hawaii from long range intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBMs) from rogue states like North Korea.

Dr. KAHL. The Homeland Defense Radar-Hawaii (HDR-H) would provide a critical capability to defend against advanced missile threats. More importantly, it would ensure we have this capability to defend all 50 U.S. States against rogue State intercontinental ballistic missiles. The defense of Hawaii is important, and, if confirmed, I will work with the Department's civilian and military leadership to develop effective and affordable systems to enhance our capabilities against these evolving threats.

#### THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

10. Senator HIRONO. Dr. Kahl, I plan to reintroduce a Senate resolution calling upon the Senate to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which entered into force over 25 years ago. The United States is still not party to the convention. Becoming party to the treaty would give the United States a legal right to intervene on international disputes relating to freedom of navigation rights. Should the Senate ratify the UNCLOS?

Dr. KAHL. The United States has treated the navigation and overflight provisions of the Convention as binding customary international law for more than four decades. Our forces act consistently with the Convention in our operations, just as the United States expects other nations to act. That said, U.S. accession to the Convention would further secure those favorable rules as treaty rights, and becoming a State Party would increase the United States' credibility and legitimacy when acting to protect the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea reflected in the Convention. If confirmed, I will work with the Secretary of Defense and my counterparts in other U.S. departments and agencies to assess this issue fully and provide my best advice to the Secretary of Defense.

11. Senator HIRONO. Dr. Kahl, will the Biden administration continue the recent uptick in freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea?

Dr. KAHL. If I am confirmed, I will follow Secretary Austin's guidance that the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, including in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR GARY PETERS

##### LAUNCH REQUIREMENTS

12. Senator PETERS. Dr. Kahl, in your advance policy questions, you state, "Responsive launch . . . can enhance threat deterrence against potential adversaries and promote space mission assurance. I understand that the Department is in the process of developing tactically responsive launch requirements that could further capitalize on commercial innovation. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Space Force and the U.S. Space Command to identify how to utilize commercial technology in launch and other space applications most effectively to meet warfighting and mission assurance requirements." Can you share any information on what those "tactically responsive launch requirements" are, and, if confirmed, specifically how you will seek to "utilize commercial technology in launch?"

Dr. KAHL. "Tactically responsive launch requirements" focus on, for example, meeting the emergent needs of an operational warfighter, as distinct from the standing needs of intelligence analysis. The changes taking place in commercial space and commercial space launch—for example, smaller satellites using commercial off-the-shelf technologies, and commercially developed small launch vehicles and reusable launch vehicles available on rapid timelines—create new possibilities for how the Department uses space to meet emergent operational needs. If confirmed, I would make it a priority to ensure that DOD strategy capitalizes on such commercial innovations.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

##### CYBERSECURITY

13. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, allies are essential to enhancing U.S. cybersecurity. We rely on our partners to conduct threat hunting, enable early warning, and harden our collective defenses. If confirmed, how will you leverage our allies' unique cyber capabilities to support our military cyber operations?

Dr. KAHL. I understand that, just like in other domains of competition and conflict, our network of allies and partners provides a crucial asymmetric advantage in cyberspace. Exchanging information, using interoperable communication platforms, and sharing one another's unique understanding of the risks to our respective networks and infrastructure make us stronger together than we ever could be alone. If confirmed, I would also support interagency efforts to work alongside allies and partners to establish cyber norms to further deter and impose multilateral costs on adversaries engaged in malign cyber activities.

14. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, how will you enhance information-sharing and cooperation with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] partners to prevent, mitigate, and recover from cyber attacks?

Dr. KAHL. The United States commitment to the NATO Alliance provides a critical comparative advantage when balancing countries like Russia and a focal point for collective action to address pressing global security challenges. If confirmed, I look forward to building on the robust combined planning, training, information-sharing, and exercise infrastructure that is at the heart of NATO, and ensuring that preventing, mitigating, and recovering from cyberattacks are at the core of that infrastructure.

15. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, the 2018 Department of Defense Cyber Strategy also calls for retaining the current cyber workforce and finding talented new people to recruit. If confirmed, what policies would you enact to cultivate a qualified cyber workforce to support the Department of Defense mission?

Dr. KAHL. Revitalizing our national security workforce, including our cyber workforce, is a top priority of the President and Secretary Austin. I understand that it is difficult for the Department to compete with the private sector when it comes to salaries for top cyber professionals. The Department's hiring advantage stems from its unique mission: serving the American people and defending the United States. If confirmed, I will work to make sure that we are appropriately leveraging all of the available hiring vehicles to recruit cyber talent, as well as providing both our uniformed military and civilian workforce the opportunity to make vital contributions to national security at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

#### WHITE SUPREMACIST TERRORISM

16. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, do you agree that international white supremacist groups increasingly pose a threat to U.S. national security?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. When the capability, intent, and motivation of any organization, including racially and ethnically motivated groups, work against or threaten the interests of the United States, including those we share with our allies and partners, then such an organization could be a threat to U.S. national security. Like the dangers posed by other radical ideologies, the threat of white supremacy and the violence it inspires can threaten our interests, and it must be confronted and countered.

17. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, how would you direct the Department of Defense intelligence elements to account for the rising threat from international white supremacist terrorist organizations?

Dr. KAHL. Responding to this growing threat will require a coordinated effort between law enforcement, our diplomats, the Intelligence Community, and the Department. Current Department efforts to address extremism in its ranks are important in their own right, and also will contribute to engagement with our allies and partners to share lessons learned and to increase intelligence collection on international white supremacist terrorist organizations and their tactics. If confirmed, I will work closely with Secretary Austin, the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security, as well as with interagency and law enforcement partners to develop a whole-of-government approach to address this threat.

18. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, what tools would you use to deter and disrupt these groups?

Dr. KAHL. The extensive expertise we have developed in understanding and disrupting the radicalization cycle and the tactics and techniques of groups like al Qaeda and ISIS provides important insights and lessons learned toward calibrated approaches to countering other violent extremist groups. One of the strengths of counterterrorism efforts of the last two decades has been the close integration of U.S. efforts and inclusion of our work with allies and partners toward our shared

goals. This experience provides the foundation for information sharing and analysis and combined efforts to disrupt groups that threaten our national security.

#### MILITARY COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL

19. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, Congress authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 the creation of the United States-Israel Operations Technology Working Group. The working group will enable United States and Israel to establish “plans to research, develop, procure, and field weapon systems and military capabilities as quickly and economically as possible to meet common capability requirements.” If confirmed, how will you implement this provision?

Dr. KAHL. I support the intent of this provision, and if confirmed, I would ensure that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy works to advance collaborative defense research, development, test, and evaluation with Israel. These efforts are to the mutual benefit of both Israel and the United States.

20. Senator ROSEN. Dr. Kahl, are you committed to stand up the United States-Israel Operations-Technology Working Group without delay?

Dr. KAHL. I support the intent of this provision, and if confirmed, I would ensure that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy works closely with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment to advance collaborative defense research, development, test, and evaluation with Israel. These efforts are to the mutual benefit of both Israel and the United States.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES M. INHOFE

##### AUTHORIZATION USE OF MILITARY FORCE

21. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, do you believe that rescission of the 1991 and 2002 Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) will diminish or enhance the set of tools that the Department of Defense has to address the global threat of terrorism and violent extremist organizations? Please explain your answer in detail.

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I intend to work across the Administration to review existing authorities and recommend updated authorizations as appropriate, in order to ensure we remain able to protect the United States from terrorist threats.

##### CLIMATE CHANGE

22. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, do you believe that the Department of Defense, with the core traditional mission of defending the Nation against foreign external threats, should be the lead agency for alternative climate-considered approaches for the country, or should some other agency within the Federal Government be the lead agency?

Dr. KAHL. Climate change is a high priority for this Administration and for the Department, as noted in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance signed by President Biden last week. I believe that DOD, in collaboration with U.S. inter-agency partners, has a critical role to play. Pursuant to direction from the President and the Secretary, as well as provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY21, DOD is considering climate-related factors as an essential element of our national security. I understand the Department is already taking steps to evaluate the implications of climate-related factors for its strategies, operations, and infrastructure—and it will take action based upon these assessments, as appropriate. Where technologies support defense missions and also provide climate-aligned benefits such as fuel savings and increased efficiency, the Department can also serve as a platform to advance positive technological innovation. If confirmed, I would advocate for these, and other, approaches.

##### SECURITY ASSISTANCE

23. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has repeatedly noted that the Indo-Pacific is the priority theater for the Department of Defense and that China is the “pacing threat”. Further, President Biden has stated repeatedly that “our alliances are our greatest asset”. Given these administration positions, in your opinion, should the percentage of U.S. security assistance provided by the Department of Defense to partners and allies in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR) be going up or down as a percentage of the Department’s overall security assistance budget?

Dr. KAHL. As the President has articulated, DOD security cooperation tools are critical to reinvigorating and modernizing our alliances and partnerships around the world, particularly with a focus on China. This includes making smart and disciplined choices about the allocation of resources. If confirmed, I would review that allocation, particularly with a focus on United States Indo-Pacific Command and efforts to compete with China globally, to ensure that we are maximizing the effective use of taxpayer funding for these programs.

#### IRAN

24. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, in response to a question from Senator Tillis at your nomination hearing, you indicated that in your extensive travel to Iraq during previous government service you experienced firsthand being on the receiving end of rocket attacks by Iran and its proxies. You also said in a separate exchange with Senator Gillibrand that you “support our efforts to defend our forces when they are attacked or threatened by Iranian proxies.” I appreciate you acknowledging the reality that Iranian-backed militias pose a threat to the United States and that we must take action to respond to their threats to our forces. Do Iraqi militias such as Kata’ib Hezbollah, Asai’ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat al-Nujaba, and Kata’ib Sayyid Shuhada receive financial support, training, and supplies from Iran?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, it is my understanding that Kata’ib Hezbollah, Asai’ib Ahl al-Haq, Harakat al-Nujaba, and Kata’ib Sayyid Shuhada receive financial support, training, and supplies from Iran. This support poses a threat to United States and Coalition personnel who are in Iraq at the invitation of the Government of Iraq to support the defeat-ISIS mission. Iran’s lethal support also undermines Iraq’s stability and threatens innocent Iraqi civilians.

25. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, during the hearing, I asked whether you agreed that as long as Iranian-backed groups target Americans, the idea of sanctions relief for Iran should be off the table. You responded, in part, “We should not ease sanctions on terrorism or their other activities.” To be clear, do you agree that the United States should not provide Iran any sanctions relief—including through the use of waivers or application of licenses—that directly or indirectly benefits any entity currently designated for sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13224, including the Central Bank of Iran, the National Iranian Oil Company, and National Iranian Tanker Company, until Iran ceases its sponsorship of terrorism?

Dr. KAHL. President Biden is committed to preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Given Iran’s history of supporting terrorism, Iran would be even more dangerous than it currently is if it were to acquire a nuclear weapon. Even as we pursue diplomacy with respect to Iran’s nuclear program, we must remain vigilant against Iran’s support for terrorism. I believe that the United States should continue to designate any Iranian entity that supports terrorist activities until that entity ceases its support for terrorism. Iran is the largest State sponsor of terrorism, and the United States should continue to implement the toughest sanctions possible to deal with Iran’s support for terrorism.

#### ISRAEL

26. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, in an October 2014 article by Jeffrey Goldberg in *The Atlantic*, an unnamed senior Obama administration official was quoted as saying, “The good thing about Netanyahu is that he’s scared to launch wars. . . . The bad thing about him is that he won’t do anything to reach an accommodation with the Palestinians or with the Sunni Arab states. The only thing he’s interested in is protecting himself from political defeat. He’s not [Yitzhak] Rabin, he’s not [Ariel] Sharon, he’s certainly no [Menachem] Begin. He’s got no guts.” Were you the unnamed official who made these comments? If so, do you regret making these comments? If not, do you agree with them?

Dr. KAHL. I am not the official who made these comments, and I do not agree with them. I support the Abraham Accords, and I believe they demonstrate the potential for Israel to normalize its relations with Arab states. If confirmed, I would work to encourage closer cooperation between Israel and its neighbors.

#### U.S. NUCLEAR DECLARATORY POLICY

27. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, during your confirmation hearing, you indicated that you do not support implementation of a “no-first-use” policy regarding U.S. nuclear weapons. Could you provide your views on whether you believe United States adoption of a “sole-purpose” strategy (i.e., U.S. nuclear weapons are only intended to deter the use of adversaries’ nuclear weapons) would be seen as credible among potential adversaries?

Dr. KAHL. As I testified, I, personally, am not in support of a “no-first-use” policy, and I would not personally support any shift in declaratory policy that undermined the credibility of our nuclear deterrent in the eyes of our adversaries or allies. I believe the United States should periodically examine its nuclear declaratory policy to ensure it supports U.S. strategic objectives and meets emerging challenges in the security environment. I anticipate that the Department will undertake a set of strategic reviews, including of U.S. nuclear posture and declaratory policy. If confirmed, I will work within the Department and with interagency partners to consider the “no-first-use” policy and other issues regarding our nuclear policy and posture, including how adversaries might view adoption of such a “sole purpose” policy. Ultimately, any decision on U.S. declaratory policy or the adoption of a “sole purpose” strategy would be made by the President.

28. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, do you believe adoption of such a policy would enhance or undermine the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence assurances among our allies?

Dr. KAHL. The U.S. declaratory policy should support our strategic objectives by increasing nuclear deterrence, reducing the risks of miscalculation, and credibly assuring U.S. allies as to our continued extended deterrence commitments. As such, I would expect to consult with our allies closely in the course of any review of our nuclear declaratory policy.

#### NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION AND THE NEW START TREATY

29. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, in your responses to the advance policy questions you were provided prior to the hearing, you committed, without reservation, to fulfilling the Senate’s condition in the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) resolution of ratification relating to engaging Russia in negotiations on its stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons. However, when asked a related question regarding the Senate’s condition on modernizing the U.S. nuclear deterrent, you did not offer similar assurances that such a commitment would be upheld, only that you would “conduct a review”. Could you clarify why you offered such different responses to these questions?

Dr. KAHL. As I testified, “the nuclear triad has been a bedrock of our strategic deterrent for decades,” and “it is important to modernize the triad because our adversaries are modernizing their capabilities . . .” I support nuclear weapons modernization and believe all three legs of the triad must remain viable. What I do not know at this time are the classified details of the U.S. nuclear modernization program. Thus, if confirmed, I am committed to looking closely at this issue and conducting a review to determine the appropriate pace and scale of modernization to ensure we have a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent consistent with the New START Treaty resolution of ratification.

30. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, do you believe that the current administration should uphold all of the conditions that the Senate established, and President Obama agreed to, in the resolution of ratification for the New START Treaty?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I am personally committed to fulfilling the conditions set forth in the New START Treaty resolution of ratification.

31. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, do you understand that it will likely be more difficult to obtain Senate approval for future arms control treaties if the Senate cannot trust that the Executive Branch will fulfill the previous commitments it has made during past processes of advice and consent?

Dr. KAHL. The Constitution states that the President has the power to make treaties by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The respective roles are critical to ensuring bipartisan support in regard to important matters of international security. I understand the respective roles played by the executive branch and the Senate and, if confirmed, will do my part to ensure adherence to constitutional obligations.

#### NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

32. Senator INHOFE. Dr. Kahl, in your responses to the advance policy questions (APQ) you were provided earlier, as well as in statements you made during your hearing, you expressed a need to obtain briefings on classified information relating to the requirement for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) before you could take a position on the program. However, in regards to a similar question on the replacement for the Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM), the Long Range



Standoff Weapon (LRSO), you replied in your APQs that you, “... understand the need to modernize and replace the ALCM.”

Information relating to both of these programs is classified at similar levels. As you stated during your hearing, you have been out of government for several years and your understanding of relevant classified information is, in your words, “4 years out of date.” How then are you able to reach a conclusion on the need for the LRSO but not the GBSD?

Dr. KAHL. As I testified, “the nuclear triad has been a bedrock of our strategic deterrent for decades,” and “it is important to modernize the triad because our adversaries are modernizing their capabilities.” Although I believe it is important to modernize the entire nuclear Triad, I understand the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) program to be significantly more expensive and technically more challenging than the Long-Range Stand-Off (LRSO) program, based on unclassified information. If confirmed I am committed to conducting a review to determine the appropriate pace and scale of the entire nuclear modernization program, given the complexities of the GBSD program. I believe this will require a close examination to ensure it meets military needs in an efficient and cost-effective manner. If confirmed, I am committed to reviewing and better understanding the classified details of both programs, and to assessing how best to ensure modernization occurs on budget and on time.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR TOM COTTON

##### IRANIAN BALLISTIC MISSILES

33. Senator COTTON. Dr. Kahl, during your nomination hearing, you said in response to a question from Senator Fischer regarding Iran’s ballistic missile threat: “we should try to get their ballistic missile capabilities reduced through diplomacy”. I am aware how Iranian officials previously boasted that as part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiations, they got the Obama administration to agree to change language in the UN [United Nations] resolution to focus on whether missiles were “designed” to be nuclear capable. I am not asking about that semantic loophole that the Obama administration conceded. What I want to know is, whether Iran’s possession of nuclear-capable missiles—specifically designed as such or not—is acceptable to you under United States policy?

Dr. KAHL. Iran’s ballistic missiles pose a grave threat to United States forces, allies, and partners, and to U.S. national security interests. It is my view that Iran’s development of nuclear-capable missiles is not acceptable and that we should take a holistic approach to constrain Iran’s missile capabilities through sanctions and diplomatic efforts, in consultation with our allies and partners.

34. Senator COTTON. Dr. Kahl, I would like you to clarify what you mean by the word “reduced”.

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I would work with other United States departments and agencies and with United States allies and partners to review the available options for addressing Iran’s continued missile development and proliferation. I believe that a mix of national security tools can slow and degrade Iran’s continued missile advancements. I also believe that there are diplomatic options to encourage Iranian restraint through self-imposed limits on its missile force.

35. Senator COTTON. Dr. Kahl, do you believe that Iran should be allowed to retain any ballistic missile—of any size or range—capable of delivering nuclear weapons?

Dr. KAHL. It is my view that Iran’s continued development of nuclear-capable missiles is not acceptable and that we should continue to enforce vigorously United States and international sanctions on Iran’s ballistic missile activities.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR THOM TILLIS

##### INDO-PACIFIC

36. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, through the European Deterrence Initiative, major improvements to the posture, readiness, and joint force enabling capabilities have been made in the United States European Command (EUCOM) area of operations through the smart application of over \$20 billion since Crimea was invaded and annexed by Russia in 2014. No similar improvements have been made in the Indo-Pacific despite its status as DOD’s “priority theater”. Do you believe we currently

have the right forward posture in the Indo-Pacific needed to accomplish the objectives of the National Defense Strategy (NDS)? If not, what must be done to fix our forward Indo-Pacific posture?

Dr. KAHL. I believe DOD requires modernized, combat-capable, and ready forces and a more resilient and distributed force posture in the Indo-Pacific region to deter and, if necessary, deny adversary aggression against the United States and our allies and partners. Although I understand that DOD has undertaken important posture initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region since 2014, I agree we should continue to ensure that our Indo-Pacific posture is optimized to deter aggression, reassure allies and partners, and prevail in conflict. If confirmed, I will work with stakeholders across DOD and with interagency partners to identify and prioritize executable and cost-efficient posture initiatives that ensure DOD maintains a combat-credible posture for deterrence and assurance in the Indo-Pacific region.

37. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, how do you assess the relative costs and benefits of permanent forces, as compared to rotational forces forward stationed overseas, particularly in Europe and the Indo-Pacific?

Dr. KAHL. We must have the right mix of permanent and rotational forces overseas, based on our operational needs in each of our theaters. If confirmed, I will ensure that we appropriately consider whether permanently stationing forces or rotationally deploying them is the right option, in consultation with our allies and partners, as we determine how best to posture our forces.

38. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, do you agree that we need forces stationed and deployed west of the International Date Line to credibly deter China in the Indo-Pacific? If so, how can we better protect these forces at fixed sites like Kadena Air Force Base?

Dr. KAHL. I agree that a combat-credible forward posture is critical to the U.S. military's ability to deter and, if necessary, deny adversary aggression. I believe that we must develop our forward posture alongside new warfighting concepts, modernized, highly capable, and ready forces, and capable allied and partner forces in order to ensure that the Joint Force can operate effectively in a contested environment.

39. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, what are the key areas in which DOD must improve to provide the Joint Force with the capabilities necessary to prevail in great power competition and potential conflict with China, as well as with Russia?

Dr. KAHL. I believe the Department must ensure that the Joint Force is combat-capable, ready, and postured to deter—and, if necessary, deny—aggression from China or Russia. Having this warfighting advantage is critical to underwriting deterrence and diplomacy. My understanding is the Department is focusing its investments on several key capabilities, including nuclear modernization, long-range conventional strike, undersea warfare, space, cyber, advanced tactical fighters, and a modernized surface fleet. I believe that a continued focus on modernizing the force remains warranted and, if confirmed, I look forward to maintaining the Department's emphasis on developing the capabilities that we need to meet the demands of the future security environment.

#### IRAN

40. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, for more than 4 decades, Iran and its terrorist proxies have targeted American civilians and military personnel—as we are currently seeing in Iraq. According to the latest National Strategy for Counterterrorism, “Iran remains the most prominent state sponsor of terrorism, supporting militant and terrorist groups across the Middle East and is cultivating a network of operatives that pose a threat in the United States and globally.” What steps should the Defense Department be taking to address Iran's regional aggression—specifically in Syria, in Yemen, in Iraq, in Lebanon?

Dr. KAHL. While serving in my previous position as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, I saw firsthand Iran's regional destabilizing activities and support for terrorism. As the Biden Administration prioritizes diplomacy to address Iran's nuclear weapons program, we must also remain vigilant against Iran's malign activities across the region. If confirmed, I would advocate for a whole-of-government approach that employs all elements of national power to disrupt and degrade Iranian threats in the region. The United States should work with its regional partners to build their capacity to restrain and counterbalance Iran. We also should adapt our strategy to the unique political dynamics in regional countries where Iran is active. In vulnerable countries like Iraq and Lebanon, we should help build institutions that are resilient to Iranian influence. In Yemen, we should sup-

port diplomatic efforts to end the conflict between the Houthis and Saudi Arabia that has provided a major opening to Iran to increase its influence. In Syria, we should leverage our presence and support to regional actors to limit Iran's freedom of operation.

41. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, how should the United States respond when Iranian-proxies target United States forces in the region?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, the protection of U.S. forces would be my highest priority. I support defensive action against Iran-backed Shia militia groups when necessary to respond to attacks or threats of imminent attack. Any U.S. response must be proportionate and reinforced by a whole-of-government approach, including diplomatic tools.

42. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, do you support the long-held position of the United States to guarantee the freedom of navigation throughout the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, and the larger waterways throughout the Middle East?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, I do. Freedom of navigation is a foundation of the rules-based international order. I fully support the Department of Defense continuing its important work with allies and partners around the world ensure that the navigational rights and freedoms guaranteed by international law are maintained and respected. Freedom of navigation is under particular threat in the Arabian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, and the southern Red Sea from Iran and its proxies. The Department of Defense should continue working with a broad coalition of international allies and partners to deter and expose threats to freedom of navigation in the Middle East and to maintain the capability to ensure these crucial waterways remain open. If confirmed, I would advise the Secretary on how to continue safeguarding the maritime environment and the rules-based international order.

#### INFORMATION/INFLUENCE DOMAIN

43. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, a recent report by the Global Engagement Center at the State Department identified growing similarities between disinformation campaigns by China, Russia, and Iran aimed at taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to undermine the United States. These efforts include spreading outright falsehoods—such as that the novel coronavirus is an American bioweapon, that the virus did not come from China, and that United States troops spread the virus. These lies obviously have no basis in reality, but it demonstrates how our adversaries are using influence operations and disinformation to try to damage the United States and our allies. This committee has used the recent National Defense Authorization Acts (NDAA) to push the Department to be more active and effective in the information domain, including by clarifying authorities and by requiring greater senior-level DOD engagement on the issue, but more work needs to be done. How would you characterize the use of disinformation by China, Russia, Iran and others to undermine United States interests and those of our partners?

Dr. KAHL. America's adversaries not only seek to hack our critical information systems, they also seek to hack our society and our politics through the spread of disinformation. As such, disinformation poses one of today's greatest challenges to the United States and our allies and partners. China, Russia, Iran, and non-state actors understand that in today's information environment they have real-time access to a global audience and that audiences often are inclined to believe the first information they receive, even if the information is false. Through "first mover advantage" and flooding the information environment with falsehoods, even if sprinkled with truth, these actors threaten our interests.

44. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, what do you find most concerning, and why?

Dr. KAHL. Disinformation, especially with a capable sponsor spreading it to susceptible audiences, can often drown out truthful information and create barriers to fact-based messaging. The United States and our allies and partners must continue to counter the sources and to refute the content of this disinformation; we also must also find ways to work proactively to defeat disinformation campaigns and their sponsors.

45. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, how do you plan to make the Department more effective at operating in the information and influence domain of warfare?

Dr. KAHL. We must take a comprehensive and deliberate approach, using our agility, capability, and capacity to connect with audiences globally in real time and to build a culture of trust. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Department's

current work in the information and influence warfare domain with a view to optimizing DOD's efforts—working alongside interagency partners—to counter the evolving threats and challenges in the information environment.

46. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, what are the Department's most pressing challenges to operating effectively in the information and influence domain?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I intend to review how the Department is organized and how it is evolving to take on the challenges to operating effectively in the information and influence domain. From my current vantage point, however, it is clear to me that we need to deepen foundations of reliability and trust with key audiences and to disrupt, directly and indirectly, our adversaries' efforts to spread disinformation as part of their national security strategies.

47. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, how will you seek to overcome these challenges?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will address the tasks required of the Department's Principal Information Operations Advisor (see 10 U.S.C 397) to improve integration of all relevant considerations—policy, strategy, planning, resource management, operational, personnel, and technology development—across all of the elements of the Department's information operations. I understand that this effort is underway and, if confirmed, I commit to keeping Congress fully informed regarding our progress.

48. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, what should be DOD's role in a whole-of-government approach to combating disinformation by adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran?

Dr. KAHL. The Department's information capabilities should be leveraged to gain and maintain the information advantage, integrated with the tools of other departments and agencies as part of a broader U.S. Government-wide approach. Our allies and partners also bring reinforcing and often unique capabilities to countering adversaries' disinformation that we should also integrate into our collective approaches.

#### DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SPENDING

49. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, the bipartisan NDS commission report, former Secretary James Mattis, and former Secretary Mark Esper all assessed that it would take 3 to 5 percent real growth to implement the 2018 NDS. In terms of real dollars, between 2010 and 2015 our defense budget decreased by about 25 percent while China increased their defense spending by 83 percent as a part of what General H.R. McMaster in his book *Battlegrounds* characterized as China's "largest peacetime military buildup in history." Given the massive increase in Chinese defense spending and focus on applying new technologies to their military capabilities, do you think a declining defense budget will improve or erode our competitive advantages over China?

Dr. KAHL. Generally, I believe that a declining defense budget will have an impact on the Joint Force's deterrent and warfighting ability vis-à-vis the China threat. Adequately resourcing the Department is important to contend with the growing challenge posed by China. However, ensuring competitive advantages over China is not only a matter of budgeting; much depends on how the Department prioritizes its future force investments, conducts day-to-day operations, and pursues reforms—and how these efforts are nested in an integrated, U.S. Government approach. Under any resourcing level, the Department must continue to focus investments on modernizing the force to deter aggression from strategic competitors, find efficiencies through reforms, and re-invest savings in the force.

50. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, in your assessment, how important is the Pacific Deterrent Initiative to deterrence of aggression by China in the Indo-Pacific and what would your priorities be for its application?

Dr. KAHL. I believe the Pacific Deterrence Initiative serves an important purpose in highlighting and tracking the substantial DOD investments needed to maintain a credible conventional deterrent in the Indo-Pacific region. Priority areas for investment might include more lethal and survivable capabilities, a more resilient and distributed force posture, improved capabilities for allies and partners, and enhanced innovation, experimentation, and training for the joint force.

#### NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION

51. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, in one of his final speeches as vice president, President Biden argued against modernizing the U.S. nuclear deterrent, advocated for unilateral U.S. nuclear weapons reductions—regardless of whether Russia would re-

ciprocate—and supported unprecedented policy constraints on the United States’ ability to deter strategic attacks against our country and our allies. At the time the then-vice president gave this speech, you were his national security advisor. Would you say that you supported the views he expressed?

Dr. KAHL. I would not characterize then-Vice President Biden’s remarks in this way. But yes, I supported his perspective that the United States should reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, even as we continue to ensure that our nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure, and effective. I anticipate President Biden will direct the relevant U.S. departments and agencies to conduct a set of strategic reviews, including of U.S. nuclear posture, that is guided by the Administration’s recently released Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, which states that “we will take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, while ensuring our strategic deterrent remains safe, secure and effective and that our extended deterrence commitments to our allies remain strong and credible.”

52. Senator TILLIS. Dr. Kahl, given that our adversaries have continued to expand and modernize their nuclear forces since the President made this speech, do you believe that pursuing such policies now is an appropriate response to these increasing threats?

Dr. KAHL. I am aware that Russia and China are actively modernizing and expanding their nuclear arsenals. As I testified, I believe “it is important to modernize the triad because our adversaries are modernizing their capabilities.” At the same time, it is also important that we limit the nuclear capabilities of our adversaries, reduce the risks of miscalculation, and increase transparency and predictability. I support pursuing strategic stability dialogues and new arms control treaties to head-off a dangerous and costly arms race, re-establish our credibility as a leader on national and international security, and reduce the risk of inadvertent conflict.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

##### SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE RANKS

53. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your opening statement you state, if confirmed, you will do all you can to “support efforts to address the scourge of sexual assault and end violent extremism and systemic racism within the ranks”. I’ve served in the Marine Corps for over 26 years. Throughout my time in the military, I’ve had the privilege to work with some of the most tolerant and inclusive leaders this country has to offer. While not perfect, the military has historically been one of the most progressive and integrated organizations in the U.S. Government, with servicemembers of all backgrounds, colors, creeds and genders working towards the same mission. There are, however, certainly problems within the military, particularly with sexual assault and harassment. With this in mind, can you expound upon and clarify your definition of systemic racism within the ranks? How do you plan on addressing it within the ranks?

Dr. KAHL. In my experience working alongside members of the U.S. military, the vast majority of men and women in uniform are tolerant, respectful, and carry out their duties with honor. However, a small minority appear to hold extremist views and there remain systemic barriers to advancement for people of color within the military ranks. As Chairman Milley testified before this Committee, “we, as a nation and as a military, are still struggling with racism, and we have much work to do.” The Trump administration recognized the need to take action, and the Biden administration is committed to tackling this challenge head on. In July 2020, then-Secretary Esper commissioned the Defense Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion in the Armed Services to provide an independent and enduring review and assessment of policies, programs and processes to improve diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for servicemembers. On February 3, 2021, Secretary Austin announced a department-wide “stand-down” to address extremism in the ranks. Secretary Austin recognizes that one of the challenges is that we do not know the full depth and breadth of the problem. Although Secretary Austin believes the number of servicemembers who adhere to such ideologies to be small, they are, in his words “not as small as anyone would like.” If confirmed, I would support the efforts underway by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Departments and Services, to more accurately assess the full scope of the challenges we face and to develop concrete mitigation measures for the issues of racism and extremism facing the military and civilian workforces.

54. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, you agreed with me during your confirmation hearing that we need more data on the issue of racism and extremism in the military to effectively address it. As someone who has never served in the military, you cannot draw on personal experience within the ranks, making data all the more important. What data did you draw on to support your statement of “systemic racism within the ranks” in your opening statement? Please be specific in the reports or surveys that you used to come to this conclusive statement.

Dr. KAHL. Publicly available information suggests there is extremism in the ranks—although Secretary Austin believes the number of servicemembers who adhere to such ideologies to be small, they are, in his words “not as small as anyone would like.” According to the Congressional Research Service, while black servicemembers comprise nearly 19 percent of the military, less than 8 percent of generals and admirals are black. The Center for Naval Analyses’ annual report on “Population Representation in the Military Services” has also published data that supports the lack of representation in leadership among people of color. Numerous news reports from the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and Reuters point to perceived racism and discrimination in the military. Similar to past efforts by the Department to lead in integration, I believe DOD can and should be in the lead to address this problem. On February 3, 2021, Secretary Austin announced a department-wide “stand-down” to address extremism in the ranks. Secretary Austin recognizes that one of the challenges is that we do not know the full depth and breadth of the problem. If confirmed, I would support ongoing efforts by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Departments and Services, to more accurately assess the full scope of the challenges we face and to develop concrete mitigation measures for the issues of racism and extremism facing the military and civilian workforces.

55. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, if you agree with me that we need more data on this issue, how are you able to make the claim that you need to address “systemic racism in the ranks”, when you have not defined the problem through data?

Dr. KAHL. On February 3, 2021, Secretary Austin announced a department-wide “stand-down” to address extremism in the ranks. Secretary Austin recognizes that one of the challenges is that we don’t know the full depth and breadth of it the problem. If confirmed, I would support ongoing efforts by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Military Departments and Services, to more accurately assess the full scope of the challenges we face and to develop concrete mitigation measures for the issues of racism and extremism facing the military and civilian workforces.

#### PAST UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY NOMINEE

56. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, former-President Donald Trump nominated General Anthony Tata to the post of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P), but the nomination was withdrawn before the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) was able to hold a hearing. Democrat Senators on SASC wrote a letter to General Tata stating that “your record of offensive and inflammatory comments disqualifies you from serving in your current position and the position for which you have been nominated.” During your confirmation hearing, Republicans brought up similar comparisons of your inflammatory comments made on twitter against the Republican Party, former-President Trump and his administration, and members of Congress. Given the Democrat rationale for opposition to General Tata, why should you not be disqualified from this position as well?

Dr. KAHL. As I mentioned during my testimony, the last few years were polarizing on social media, and there were times that I got swept up in that. There were moments where I strongly opposed decisions made by President Trump, but it is clear that the language I used in opposing some of those decisions was disrespectful, and for that, I apologize. I understand the position I am being nominated for, although a political appointment, is not a political job—it is a policy job. If confirmed, I commit to working in a nonpartisan way within the Department and in a bipartisan fashion with this committee and others in Congress to do what is in the best interest of our national security. I am deeply committed to nonpartisan public service and based on my previous experience working in the Pentagon, including my work for two Republican Secretaries of Defense, I have a clear record of comporting myself in this way while in office.

## GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE ARCTIC

57. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, given the National Defense Strategy's focus on great power competition and the rapid development of Russia and China's capabilities in the Arctic, would you agree that the Arctic is an emerging front-line for great power competition and rivalry? Please elaborate.

Dr. KAHL. I agree that Russia and China are increasingly exhibiting competing behavior in the Arctic, among other regions. It is important to note that the challenges these competitors pose in the Arctic are distinct. Russia's approach to the Arctic largely focuses on territorial defense and economic development. It is advancing its interests through a modest increase in Arctic-based forces, which is intended to improve its operational capability in northern latitudes, exert greater control of the Northern Sea Route, and exploit the resources located in and around the region. China is also active in the region, but it is largely focused on increasing its influence and securing access to resources, primarily through predatory economic behavior.

58. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the Department of Defense released its Arctic Strategy in June 2019, the Air Force followed suit with its own in July 2020, the Department of the Navy published their Arctic Blueprint in January 2021, and the Army's Arctic Strategy is forthcoming. Can I get a commitment from you—like I did from Secretary Austin and Secretary Hicks—to ensure these Service-Arctic strategies are fully resourced to ensure the Department can successfully defend the Homeland along our northern approaches?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I am committed to helping ensure that the Department has the appropriate capabilities to advance defense objectives, including those related to the Arctic. I believe DOD should continue to balance consideration of Arctic investments, including those identified in Military Department strategies, with broader, global priorities and Joint Force capability and posture needs. If confirmed, I would use the Department's 2019 Arctic Strategy as a guide to inform Policy's work on defense-related Arctic issues, in the context of this Administration's defense strategy.

59. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in our conversation ahead of your confirmation hearing, you mentioned that throughout the meetings and briefings you've participated in—up to now—that roles, responsibilities, and expertise regarding Arctic-related issues seems to be spread across a wide number of offices. And, that no one appears to have a complete regional picture to effectively and comprehensively inform Arctic policy. With that in mind, would you support establishing an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic Policy so that a singular person has the responsibility, accountability, and importance to establish comprehensive policy and advocate for the increasingly competitive region?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will conduct a review of our staffing and organization to ensure that the Policy team is best prepared to address the myriad threats facing our country today, including the growing strategic importance of the Arctic. Although I am confident that the Policy team is able to collaborate across regional and functional boundaries to provide the Department's senior leadership sound policy recommendations, I would work closely within the Administration and with Congress on any recommendation of staffing changes at the Assistant Secretary level to address emerging needs, such as increasing focus on the Arctic.

60. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, what capability gaps presently exist that inhibit our ability to effectively: 1) project and sustain power in the Arctic, and 2) compete with Russia and China in the northern latitudes? Please elaborate.

Dr. KAHL. I understand the Department has identified a range of capabilities that are necessary to project and sustain power to, and in, the Arctic region to compete with Russia and China in the northern latitudes. For example, this includes improved domain awareness systems and robust communications capabilities. By focusing on these kinds of priority capability areas, DOD will be positioned to make significant improvements to its ability to operate in the Arctic region, while supporting the Joint Force's broader capability priorities. If confirmed, I will examine these issues in the context of the National Defense Strategy review.

61. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the nearest Department of Defense Strategic Seaport is the Port of Anchorage; which is some 1,500 nautical miles from the Arctic Circle. That is equivalent to asking Boston to cover Miami on the East Coast. In your personal opinion, do we have the necessary infrastructure—like Strategic Arc-

tic Ports and expeditionary airfields—to project power and effectively compete in the region?

Dr. KAHL. I believe that potential infrastructure gaps in the Arctic should be considered in the context of DOD's global mission demands and defense priorities. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing DOD's global force posture, including requirements for the Arctic, to help ensure that Secretary Austin's decision on Strategic Arctic Ports is informed by a detailed understanding of the Department's operating requirements, robust analysis, and U.S. interagency perspectives.

62. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, would you agree that our Nation needs a Strategic Arctic Port? Please explain.

Dr. KAHL. My understanding is that DOD's ongoing study regarding Strategic Arctic Ports will help inform the Department's overall evaluation of Arctic infrastructure and capability needs, in the context of DOD's global mission demands and defense priorities. If confirmed, I am committed to evaluating DOD's analysis and consulting with Congress on this matter carefully to inform my advice to the Secretary on posture decisions.

63. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the port at Nome, Alaska stands out for its existing infrastructure including a well utilized runway, established port with large ship traffic, and its hospital. Congress also recently authorized—in the Omnibus appropriations bill—\$500 million for the “Nome Deep Draft Port Project.” Will you commit to taking a personal look at Nome—or Port Clarence or Adak—for development as a port to support the Department and U.S. Coast Guard requirements? Both previous Secretaries of the Navy were strong advocates in this effort.

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I am committed to evaluating potential Arctic port locations, including Nome, Alaska, as part of the requirement in Section 1752 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 to evaluate potential sites for one or more strategic ports in the Arctic. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Department's analysis on the range of strategic, political-military, operational, fiscal, and other factors when considering this important matter. I believe it is in DOD's interest to continue to work closely with U.S. interagency partners, including the U.S. Coast Guard, on this issue.

64. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, do we have the right mix of U.S. Navy surface ships to visibly contest illegal maritime claims, provide maritime warning and defense, and ensure a free and open maritime domain year-round—with surface FONOPs [freedom of navigation operations]—in the Arctic?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will closely examine this issue and work with the military departments and services regarding force posture and force development to ensure the Department meets present and future requirements, including those related to the Arctic.

65. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, do you see any strategic value in ice-hardening a select number of Navy ships to better project power into the Arctic?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I would defer to the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to identify the Department of Homeland Security's preferred approach to resourcing its proposed icebreaker capability to support its operational requirements most effectively. From a DOD perspective, U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard vessels are designed and constructed to meet multiple requirements and involve trade-offs to achieve the optimum balance of capability. If confirmed, I will ensure that DOD works with DHS to continue meeting our respective mission requirements. I would use the Department's 2019 Arctic Strategy as a guideline to inform DOD's work on defense-related Arctic issues, including considering the value of ice-hardening a select number of Navy ships in the context of the Joint Force's broader global priorities and strategic objectives.

66. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, what is the risk of not ice-hardening a select number of Navy ships and relying predominantly on the U.S. Coast Guard alone to project the regional force presence needed when surface ice is present?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I believe it is appropriate for the DOD to continue to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on its efforts to bolster its icebreaking capability, which directly supports the U.S. Coast Guard's icebreaking mission. I would defer to the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify DHS's preferred approach to meet its operational requirements most effectively. I understand the U.S. Navy, and the Joint Force at-large, continue to be able to project force and meet their operational requirements at any time or location in the



world, including in the Arctic region, through a combination of submarine, surface, air, and space capabilities, among others.

67. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, you characterized Moscow's approach in the Arctic as: "largely from a territorial defense perspective." Yet, Russia has increased its incursions of the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone markedly over the last year. In fact, the average number of intercepts of Russian aircraft from 2007 to 2019 was six to seven. In 2020—through October—there were a total of 14. Further, Russia has also increased the frequency and scale of military exercises in the region. Last August, the Russian navy conducted a major exercise consisting of more than 50 warships and 40 aircraft in the Bering sea; which, also encompassed them expelling U.S. fishing fleets from our own exclusive economic zone. Do you view these activities as defensive in nature?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will review intelligence assessments of Russian long-range aviation and naval activity to inform my understanding of the situation, and I will respond with an informed position at that point.

68. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, what, in your opinion, would constitute military activity in the Arctic that can be characterized as offensive?

Dr. KAHL. In the absence of access to classified information, it would not be prudent to speculate on this issue at this time. If confirmed, I will review intelligence assessments, and I will reply to you with an informed position.

#### ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

69. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, do you agree that U.S. energy independence—leveraging an "all the above" approach to include renewables, oil and gas—is a long-standing, vital element of our national security?

Dr. KAHL. The U.S. Government should pursue energy independence and diversified energy sources as a vital element of our national security and economic interests. It is in our national security interest to pursue long-term, sustainable solutions that address climate change and ensure continuity of operations for the Department, and to make thoughtful investments to decrease our dependence on vulnerable sources of energy and fuel supplies.

70. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, do you believe the United States becoming reliant on other countries for oil and gas helps or hurts our national security?

Dr. KAHL. It is in the Department's national security interests to pursue diversified and alternative energy resources. Domestic energy production, investing in renewable energy, and diversifying energy supply sources offer options to address concerns regarding potentially destabilizing reliance on other countries, particularly competitor nations and potential adversaries.

71. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, do you believe the United States being an exporter of energy help or hurts our national security?

Dr. KAHL. I believe it helps the United States' national security to be an energy exporter.

#### BUDGET/READINESS

72. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the National Defense Strategy Commission report, the two previous Senate-confirmed Defense Secretaries, and the previous and current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have all stated the need for sustained 3 to 5 percent annual real growth to the defense budget to implement the National Defense Strategy, increase much-needed readiness, and advance long-overdue modernization. In your personal opinion, do you believe this is an appropriate target when considering what we ask of Armed Forces today and what we will ask of it in the future?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the alignment of this Administration's defense priorities with resources in the context of a National Defense Strategy review. At any budget level, however, I believe that the Department must develop new warfighting concepts to inform its capability priorities and pursue reforms to harness savings that can be reinvested in the future Joint Force. DOD's missions should be nested within integrated U.S. Government approaches to global challenges.

73. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, under a number of different U.S. presidential administrations, cuts to defense spending have forced the Department of Defense to

make tough budget decisions that have led to plummeting readiness for the U.S. Armed Forces. For instance, at the end of the Obama administration, only 3 of 58 Army Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) were combat-ready, and less than half the Marine Corps aviation fleets were flight-ready at the time. With steady defense spending under the Trump administration, the Army now reports that half of its BCTs are rated at the highest levels of tactical readiness and the Marine Corps aviation has reached 80 percent readiness goals. If confirmed, will you commit to working to ensure the readiness of our forces is improving, not declining, under the Biden administration?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, if confirmed, I will work to ensure the readiness of our forces continues to improve, enabling warfighting preparedness of the Joint Force.

74. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, how will you work to accomplish this under what may be flat or declining defense budgets?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will exercise my role in advising the Secretary on ways the Department should prioritize investments in readiness and modernization for high-end conflict and, when necessary, in making hard choices not to field additional force structure that the Department cannot make ready and capable with proper resourcing. The next National Defense Strategy review will inform the development of these priorities and choices. Under any budget environment, the Department should optimize its resourcing choices by developing new warfighting concepts that inform smart investments and continue to harness funds from reforms and efficiencies to invest further in the Joint Force.

75. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, I think you would agree that diplomacy is always the preferred method of avoiding and/or ending conflict; however, diplomacy is only credible if it is fully backed by a strong, ready military. In your personal opinion, how important is a robust military capability for negotiating diplomatically and empowering the United States State Department, particularly with near-peer competitors like Russia and China? What about with rogue state nations like North Korea and Iran? Please elaborate.

Dr. KAHL. The United States should lead with diplomacy wherever possible, and military force should be the option of last resort. At the same time, I believe the United States' diplomatic efforts are bolstered by the Department of Defense serving as the ultimate guarantor of U.S. security. The Department can best serve this role by maintaining a force that can credibly deter aggression and, if necessary, fight and win the Nation's wars. DOD maintains close relationships with interagency partners—and particularly with the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Strong cooperation throughout the executive branch is critical to protect the United States from a range of threats, including those posed by China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, as well as transnational challenges such as climate change and pandemics.

#### MISSILE DEFENSE

76. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, given that Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin has recused himself from issues involving Raytheon, you will likely be handling many missile defense-related issues in the Department. In your personal opinion, what are your thoughts broadly on the U.S. Homeland missile defense system?

Dr. KAHL. Defense of the homeland is a DOD priority, and missile defense is a central component of this mission. In conjunction with nuclear deterrence, the Department must ensure we have effective missile defenses to safeguard the American people from missile threats from rogue nations. If confirmed, I will closely monitor all homeland missile defense programs to ensure that they adequately address the threat and align with the Administration's policies.

77. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, which specific capabilities need to be improved and which new capabilities need to be prioritized?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I would work to develop reliable, cost-effective, sustainable, and scalable solutions to defend against missile threats from rogue nations. I support continuing improvements to national missile defense, including improving discrimination capabilities and sensors, for detection of both ballistic and hypersonic missiles. I would support continuing improvements to our homeland missile defense architecture, and will review the particular concepts, programs, and capabilities as part of our broader defense strategy.

78. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the National Defense Strategy articulates the top defense objective as: "defending the Homeland from attack;" a vital component of

meeting this objective is robustly investing in our Nation's missile defense capabilities. Unfortunately, we are trending in the wrong direction regarding this issue—North Korea and Iran continue to expand the quantity, range, and lethality of their arsenals, as do our top great power competitors—Russia and China—with long-range cruise missiles and hypersonic weapons. Yet, as these threats trend upward, the budget allocated to the Missile Defense Agency trends flat or downward. It is past time to put our money where our mouth is, and invest in this lagging deterrence capability. Will you commit—if confirmed—to ensuring adequate resources are allocated toward modernizing and fielding a robust missile defense capability—commensurate with current and future threats?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. Defending the U.S. Homeland, as well as globally deployed U.S. and allied and partner forces, is a priority for DOD, and missile defense is a central component of these unique missions. If confirmed, I will continue to support improvement of our capabilities to address a limited missile attack from rogue nations; and advocate for the resources needed to safeguard the American people against rogue State missile attacks while also providing credible support to our regional allies and partners against advanced missile threats in operational theaters. If confirmed, I will work to develop effective and affordable solutions to stay ahead of the evolving missile threats in these domains.

79. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, from a national security perspective, the planned Next Generation Interceptor (NGI) gives you complete capabilities needed to defend against rogue nation threats, but not until 2030. I included language in the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA—which recently passed - mandating that DOD comprehensively look at an Interim-GBI [ground-based interceptor] solution to deliver capability by 2026. It is my understanding that may not be feasible. If confirmed, can I get your commitment to prioritize any effort that delivers much-needed capability—whether it's an interim capability or an accelerated NGI—to our warfighters to defend America's Homeland?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, defense of the homeland is a DOD priority. The Department must provide reliable and cost-effective missile defenses and continue to develop more reliable defenses as early as possible. If confirmed, I will monitor the Next Generation Interceptor acquisition plan closely and ensure that it adequately addresses the threat and aligns with the Administration's policies. We should prioritize an effective system to improve our limited missile defense capability against rogue States, and we should minimize the risks of delay or cost growth. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing whether an interim solution may be possible and warranted on a relevant timeline and as a cost-effective investment. As part of the review of our missile defense programs, I will ensure the Department maintains maximum decision space to ensure we pursue a program that delivers on cost and on schedule.

80. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, what are the risks of waiting nearly a decade to field NGI?

Dr. KAHL. The United States is currently defended from existing intercontinental missile threats posed by rogue States by the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system. We must continue to have a credible missile defense that defends the United States and its allies and partners. If confirmed, I will work to develop effective and affordable solutions responsive to evolving missile threats to the United States, and to deliver those capabilities on a timeline relevant to those threats. I support delivering a capability on an early timeline and, if confirmed, I review particular concepts and capabilities to ensure that we are improving defense of the United States as quickly as possible while minimizing risk and maintaining strategic stability.

81. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, how could we accelerate the process?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will review the concepts, programs, and capabilities related to the next-generation interceptor program and the ground-based midcourse defense system to be able to advise the Secretary and Deputy Secretary on specific courses of action to improve the protection of the homeland more quickly and responsibly.

82. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the missile capabilities possessed by rogue nations—North Korea and Iran—continue to rapidly evolve. The New York Times recently reported that North Korea showcased the country's "largest-ever" ICBM just over a month ago, and revealed a new submarine-launched ballistic missile even more recently. Provided the presence of these very real and capable threats to our Nation's homeland, are the 44 GBIs currently postured enough to present a credible defense of the American people. In your personal opinion, do we need to expand be-

yond the additional 20 new GBIs planned (for a total of 64 GBIs)—as authorized by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2018 NDAA?

Dr. KAHL. The Department of Defense currently defends the United States against the growing threat from North Korea by ensuring robust nuclear deterrence and limited missile defenses. If confirmed, I will work to ensure we sustain reliable nuclear forces and develop effective and affordable solutions responsive to evolving missile threats to the U.S. Homeland. I will review particular concepts, programs, and capabilities in the context of our broader defense strategy and ensure they align with the Administration's priorities. As part of this review, I will assess whether additional interceptors may be needed beyond the current plan of adding another 20 interceptors.

83. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the United States has consistently held that it will accept no limitations on its missile defense systems. Any such limitations could constrain or preclude missile defense technologies and options necessary in the future to protect the American people, its forces, and allies and partners. In your personal opinion, would you agree that our missile defense capabilities should NOT be limited, especially since they are defensive in nature, as part of any future arms control negotiations or agreements? Please elaborate.

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will support review of missile defense policy and capabilities in the context of a broader defense strategy review to ensure our missile defense policy and investments are aligned with this Administration's priorities. I believe we should maintain our ability to defend ourselves against a limited missile attack from rogue states. If confirmed, I intend to ensure that the Department's views inform any arms control negotiations.

#### KC-46 BASING

84. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the previous Senate-confirmed Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) Mark Esper acknowledged that collocation of 100 5th-generation fighters with KC-46 tankers would provide our Nation with "extreme strategic reach". The current Senate-confirmed Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, stated: "... [KC-46s] must be beddown in the locations that most efficiently meet steady state and COCOM [combatant command] requirements." Provided Alaska's geostrategic location along the seams of INDOPACOM and EUCOM—the two priority theaters of great power competition—what kind of message would it send to our allies to base KC-46s alongside our F-22s and F-35s in the Arctic region?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will examine this basing issue and ensure we are postured to optimize our ability to meet operational requirements, including in the Arctic and Indo-Pacific regions.

85. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, the commander of U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), General Stephen Lyons, has stated: "The aerial refueling fleet continues to underpin the Joint Force's ability to deploy an immediate force across all NDS mission areas ..." Given Alaska's ongoing beddown of F-35s, existing access to expansive training ranges, and my State's proximity to several high-priority regions, will you commit—if confirmed, as Secretary Austin has done—to take a personal look at KC-46 basing to ensure our Nation pursues a long-term, strategy-driven decision, not solely a short-term, budget-driven decision?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I will review and consider options for basing KC-46 aircraft and advise U.S. Air Force leaders and Secretary Austin, where appropriate.

86. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in the Air Force's force-sizing construct—"The Air Force We Need"—it calls for a plus-up to 386 total squadrons, including a plus-up of 14 tanker squadrons. This squadron end-strength was recently codified in the Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA. Given Congress' recent support of Air Force end-strength increases and given the critical shortage of tankers (as highlighted by Gen. Lyons), should the Air Force look to beddown additive squadrons of KC-46s—like what would occur at Eielson Air Force Base?

Dr. KAHL. I appreciate the importance of building up the U.S. Air Force's tanker fleet. If confirmed, I will work with U.S. Air Force leaders, where appropriate, as they consider how best to posture additional squadrons.

#### DEFENSE POSTURE REVIEW INITIATIVE

87. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, it is my view that if we look at the United States force posture in the Indo-Pacific, it is a snapshot of where U.S. Forces were following World War II and the Korean War. In other words, it's stale. Given that, I believe our current force posture in the priority theater is insufficient to compete

in either peacetime or conflict. I continue to have concerns with implementation of Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI)—and because of that—I wrote a provision in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requiring a review of the current DPRI plan; which, has still yet to be submitted to the congressional defense committees. Can you discuss—broadly—your opinion of our force posture in the Indo-Pacific, and—more narrowly—your opinion of DPRI?

Dr. KAHL. I believe that a combat-credible, resilient, and distributed DOD force posture in the Indo-Pacific region is critical to deter and, if necessary, deny adversary aggression against the United States and its allies and partners. The Defense Policy Review Initiative is an essential part of maintaining a resilient, distributed, and combat-credible Joint Force posture that also upholds our alliance commitments to Japan and other key allies and partners.

88. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in addition to the above requests for your personal opinion, can I get your commitment to prioritize and expedite the completion and submission of the Fiscal Year 2020 NDAA, section 1260(k) report on Marine Corps laydown in the Indo-Pacific region—which is almost 9 months past due—to assist the congressional defense committees in their oversight responsibilities?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I pledge to prioritize the completion and submission of the report required by Section 1260K of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020. I will work with counterparts from across DOD and with Congress to ensure we provide sufficient resources to maintain a combat-credible force posture in the Indo-Pacific region in the short, medium, and long term.

#### CRITICAL MINERALS

89. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in July of last year, numerous news outlets, including Forbes magazine and the Wall Street Journal reported that “China is using threats of a rare earth embargo on Lockheed Martin following the United States company winning a contract to upgrade batteries of Patriot air defense missiles in Taiwan.” On February 16, 2021, the Financial Times reported that China, “wants to know if the United States may have trouble making F-35 fighter jets if China imposes an export ban” on rare earth minerals. This is no longer just talk, this deficiency in our critical mineral supply chain is actively harming American companies, and more importantly, our national security. Do you support increasing domestic mining and processing on American soil to strengthen critical mineral supply chains?

Dr. KAHL. I support ensuring sufficient domestic mining and increasing processing of rare earth elements.

90. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, the United States imports nearly all rare earth elements from Chinese sources and has almost doubled its foreign dependence on foreign minerals in the last 2 decades. In 2019, the United States imported half of the majority of its nonfuel minerals and is still 100 percent reliant on foreign sources of 14 minerals deemed critical to the economic and national security of the United States by the U.S. Geological Survey. DOD uses as much as 750,000 tons of critical minerals and metals each year across almost all modern defense technologies, ranging from night vision goggles to missile defense systems and jet engines. Do you see increasing domestic production of minerals critical to the U.S. defense industrial base as a national security priority?

Dr. KAHL. Yes, ensuring sufficient domestic mining and increasing processing of minerals critical to the defense industrial base are national security priorities.

#### FORCE STRUCTURE

91. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, with respect to our force sizing construct, the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) Commission Report states, “... the United States now faces five credible challengers, including two major-power competitors, and three distinctly different geographic and operational environments. This being the case, a two-war force sizing construction makes more strategic sense today than at any previous point in the post-Cold war era. Instead, the NDS adopts what is functionally a one-war force sizing construct and recommends only modest increases in force capacity, an approach that is likely to create severe strategic and operational vulnerabilities for the United States.” Provided the security environment has not lessened to any notable degree since 2018, do you agree with this statement reported by the Commission? If not, please explain your reasoning and the level of risk our Nation accepts if we pursue a lesser force sizing construct.

Dr. KAHL. As I understand it, the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), through its force planning construct, made the deliberate decision to prioritize modernized

capabilities over capacity to ensure the Joint Force is fully prepared for the challenges posed by a future high-end contingency with a strategic competitor. This necessarily required accepting some risk in sizing today's force to develop a more lethal, resilient, and combat-credible military for future threats, while rebuilding readiness to mitigate near-term risk. Of course, the balance between capability and capacity must be periodically reassessed and recalibrated as the threats and challenges evolve. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the force planning construct during development of the next NDS to ensure that we are able to meet the demands of the future security environment most effectively.

#### COMMERCIAL SPACE PORTS

92. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, both the Air Force and Congress have been supportive of evolving non-traditional sub-orbital and orbital launch opportunities within the United States including the use of State-owned launch facilities. These facilities increase the capability and number of launch facilities ensuring our Nation's ability to launch priority space assets. Will you continue supporting non-traditional opportunities including the use of State-owned launch facilities such as the complexes at Kodiak and Wallops Island?

Dr. KAHL. These non-traditional, State-owned launch facilities add capacity and diversification that enable growth in commercial, civil, and military uses of space, all to the nation's benefit. I am aware that the Department is looking at how to leverage such non-traditional launch facilities to help meet its needs, and, if I am confirmed, I will support that initiative.

93. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in your personal opinion, what would constitute as acceptable risks associated with launching military and classified space assets from facilities outside of the United States?

Dr. KAHL. I believe our most important national security capabilities to support military and intelligence needs should be launched from secure facilities in the United States. On the other hand, there are cases, such as exploratory research and development programs where we have a ride-share secondary payload on another launch, or programs where an ally or partner's satellite hosts one of our payloads, where we might find significant advantage by allowing launch from a trustworthy overseas site. Key risk considerations in such situations would include ensuring necessary protections for any export-controlled technologies, and ensuring we are not harming our own industrial base.

94. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, what is your sense of the current resiliency of United States' access to space beyond the Eastern and Western Ranges? Where could it be improved?

Dr. KAHL. Commercial launch is a burgeoning industry that is adding capacity and resiliency that support total U.S. space launch needs. The same is true of State-sponsored spaceports. The Department of Defense and the Nation can benefit from these emerging launch capabilities. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Space Force and other Federal launch stakeholders to leverage these launch capabilities and continue improving the resiliency of our access to space.

95. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, do you see U.S. commercial spaceports as an efficient and cost saving option to promote U.S. Government access to space? If so, how?

Dr. KAHL. U.S. commercial spaceports provide opportunities, beyond the existing Federal ranges, for increased access to space at reduced cost. I am aware that for some missions, the Department is partnering with emerging space launch providers that operate from commercial spaceports. If confirmed, I would support the work of DOD's space launch acquisition community, in partnership with the commercial sector, to identify appropriate opportunities to meet DOD mission requirements more efficiently by utilizing such capabilities.

#### IRAN POLICY

96. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, in 2017, Congress passed a bill—the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act—by a near-unanimous vote in both chambers that required Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) to be designated as terrorists. The previous administration followed through on this bipartisan call from Congress. Do you agree with this designation and would you support keeping terrorism sanctions on the IRGC and all its affiliates until they have fully and verifiably ceased their support for terrorism?

Dr. KAHL. The IRGC and its affiliates are responsible for terrorism against the United States and our regional partners, including the deaths of U.S. servicemembers. I support keeping terrorism-related sanctions on the IRGC and its affiliates until they cease their support for terrorism.

97. Senator SULLIVAN. Dr. Kahl, would you support not lifting, rescinding, or significantly modifying terrorism designations related to the Government of Iran unless Iran permanently and verifiably ceases its support for international terrorism and these entities meet the criteria for removal as Specially Designated Global Terrorists?

Dr. KAHL. I would not support lifting terrorism-related designations on Iranian entities until those entities cease their support for terrorism and meet any other criteria as required by United States law.

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#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR RICK SCOTT

##### CHINA

98. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, the National Defense Strategy was a good start in our confrontation with Communist China. The modernization of our forces for this challenge is very important, but it is also important to make it clear that the United States will defend Taiwan against Communist China's aggression. Taiwan's independence is key to preventing Communist China from controlling the Pacific region. That is why I have introduced the Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act. Would you agree that if Taiwan were to fall into the hands of the Communist Chinese regime, the United States, Japan, and South Korea would face an almost catastrophic strategic loss in the Pacific?

Dr. KAHL. As articulated in the Taiwan Relations Act, any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means would be "a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific Sea and of grave concern to the United States." The President's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance makes clear the United States' commitments to Taiwan. These commitments reflect a bipartisan position that the United States has maintained over the previous six Administrations.

##### IRAN

99. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, when I spoke with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and we offered our differing views on the Iran Deal, he noted that "President Donald Trump didn't give the JCPOA enough time." I've been clear that I believe the Iran Deal was disastrous because it wasn't stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, wasn't stopping terrorism, and wasn't doing anything about its missile program. I and others in the Senate have introduced legislation to prevent the United States from joining another bad Iran Deal. What is your view now of the deal and what do you think the red lines should be before the United States considers another attempt at negotiations with the Iranian regime?

Dr. KAHL. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) effectively constrained Iran's nuclear program. The comprehensive nuclear arrangement we reached with our allies, Russia, and China blocked Iran's pathways to a nuclear weapon and enabled robust international monitoring of all aspects of Iran's nuclear supply chain and fuel cycle. In particular, the arrangement blocked a plutonium pathway, and its stringent limitations on Iran's uranium enrichment program ensured that Iran would need about a year to produce sufficient fissile material for a nuclear weapon if it decided to pursue one. The JCPOA left available the option to re-impose nuclear-related sanctions in the event of Iranian non-compliance. The United States also continued to impose sanctions on Iran for its support to terrorism, its human rights abuses, and its missile program.

I support diplomatic efforts to roll back Iran's nuclear provocations that have occurred since the last administration's decision to exit the JCPOA. Iran is now much closer to having the fissile material required for a nuclear weapon than it was under the JCPOA.

I am also clear-eyed about the non-nuclear threats Iran poses through its regional activities and missile programs. I support President Biden's stated intent to lengthen and strengthen the parameters of the JCPOA and pursue diplomatic efforts to address Iran's other malign activities. If confirmed, I would work in support of President Biden's strategy, coordinating with our allies and partners to formulate a strong negotiating position with Iran.

## ISRAEL

100. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, I understand you have said in the past that it was a mistake to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to move our embassy there. Given that the previous administration helped secure several peace deals among Israel and other Arab nations, and those countries obviously accepted the embassy move and put pressure on Palestinian leadership to stop being the obstacle to peace, do you still think it was a mistake?

Dr. KAHL. My earlier positions reflected longstanding, official U.S. policy. I think dynamics in the Middle East have changed in the last few years, and I think the Abraham Accords are a product of that change. I support the Abraham Accords and President Biden's policy that he would not move the United States embassy back to Tel Aviv.

## SPACE

101. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, to respond to increasing threats from great power competitors, what specific policies would you seek to implement to ensure that the U.S. Space Force and U.S. Space Command continue to have consistent and diverse access to the space domain through improved launch capabilities, and also effectively leverage commercial space capabilities— in the areas of space access, mobility, and logistics?

Dr. KAHL. If confirmed, I would work with the U.S. Space Force and U.S. Space Command to leverage and build on the existing strong relationships between the U.S. commercial space industry and the Department. For example, I am aware that the U.S. Space Command has established a commercial integration cell in its space operations center that greatly enhances space situational awareness to support space access, mobility, logistics, security, and other activities for DOD, as well as for civil and commercial space operations. I support such innovative partnering approaches that strengthen our competitiveness.

102. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, the space industry is an important and iconic part of Florida's history. After President Obama tried to kill the space program with massive budget cuts, I worked as governor to make critical enhancements and investments to create thousands of jobs and improve infrastructure on Florida's Space Coast. We were successful in part thanks to private partnerships. How do you see the U.S. Space Force and U.S. Space Command leveraging private partnerships?

Dr. KAHL. I see the longstanding partnerships between the Department of Defense and commercial launch service providers and commercial space service providers as an integral part of our strategic approach to space and emblematic of the kinds of beneficial relationships we should foster in the space mission area. If confirmed, I would continue to support developing and leveraging such partnerships.

103. Senator SCOTT. Dr. Kahl, should the Department of Defense continue to rely on assumptions that assured access to space only requires two launch providers? Please explain.

Dr. KAHL. Law and policy require at least two families of launch vehicles capable of delivering our national security payloads into space. That framework has served us well for many years, and I think it remains sound. Fortunately, the growth of commercial space capabilities is creating new opportunities and adding resiliency, both in terms of launch vehicle diversity and reliability and in terms of payload designs. If confirmed, I would work to ensure the Department continues to take advantage of such innovations to maximize assured access to space.

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 QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR MARSHA BLACKBURN

## IRAN

104. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, do believe that Iran was not covertly maintaining a nuclear weapons archive while the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was being negotiated?

Dr. KAHL. I understand from public information that Iran maintained an archive of documents on its pre-2004 nuclear weapon efforts. This very troubling information only underscores the importance of working with our allies and partners to ensure that verifiable limits are again imposed on Iran's nuclear program and that the International Atomic Energy Agency maintains its efforts to understand the full scope of Iran's past efforts to acquire a nuclear weapon.



105. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, Iran purchased commercial satellite images to inform its ballistic missile strike on United States and coalition forces at Ain al-Asad Air Base on January 7, 2020. If confirmed, what actions would you recommend to address Iran's use of commercial satellite imagery to support its ballistic missile program?

Dr. KAHL. I am not privy to any classified details on Iran's January 2020 ballistic missile strikes against United States and Coalition forces in Iraq. If confirmed, I would review Iran's access to and use of commercial satellite imagery to support its ballistic missile program.

106. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, during your service in the Obama administration, how many times did you meet with members of the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) and Members of Congress, respectively?

Dr. KAHL. As part of my White House official duties, I attended meetings convened with progressive, nonproliferation, and arms control organizations to discuss the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). My recollection is that NIAC was one of the many groups that attended those meetings. I also attended meetings with many members of Congress to discuss the JCPOA.

#### PACIFIC DETERRENCE

107. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, how specifically would you work with combatant commanders to balance short- and long-term priorities for resourcing the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI)?

Dr. KAHL. I believe in the importance of working closely with the Combatant Commanders to understand their operational requirements, which helps to inform our investments. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with the Joint Staff, the Military Departments and Services, and DOD's analytic, programming, and budgeting communities, as well as the Combatant Commands, to ensure we fund initiatives that counter Chinese aggression and reassure our allies and partners.

108. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, what do you assess would be the specific security implications of not robustly resourcing the PDI?

Dr. KAHL. I believe that maintaining the robust, combat-credible capability, capacity, and infrastructure necessary to deter aggression in the Indo-Pacific region will require significant, focused, and efficient investments of DOD resources over time. If confirmed, I pledge to examine carefully and advocate for the resources necessary to uphold our security requirements in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

109. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, do you assess that reducing the number of U.S. troops in United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) would weaken DOD's ability to implement the National Defense Strategy (NDS)? If so, please specify the specific ways in which such action would weaken DOD's ability to implement the NDS.

Dr. KAHL. The Department of Defense's "by, with, and through" approach to achieving security and stability in Africa, in collaboration with regional partners, has proven largely effective with a limited forward presence. Security cooperation often enhances larger partner force operations, which helps achieve shared objectives and build enduring relationships. The Department needs to remain engaged in Africa at appropriate levels to meet our security objectives. If confirmed, I will consider Commander, United States Africa Command's requirements and requests for forces, and will advise the Secretary consistent with the direction provided in our national security and defense strategies.

110. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, which of AFRICOM's activities do you assess to be critical to United States efforts to counter China in Africa? Please specify such activities to counter China's debt trap diplomacy, exploitation of resources, and development of relationships with young military leaders.

Dr. KAHL. The Department of Defense's most powerful tool to counter China in Africa is to provide security assistance, such as superior training and equipment, that meets our partners' security needs. As we work alongside African nations to address violent extremism, maritime threats, and more, we nurture strong relationships with our counterparts and secure our role as their preferred partner. This includes professional military education, coordinated with the Department of State, which helps develop these relationships with young military leaders in the United States and in Africa. Our security assistance also enhances the resilience of African nations to counter malign activities. For example, the Department of State and

DOD work with West African Navies and Coast Guards to enhance their capabilities against maritime crime, including Chinese illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing that harms local maritime economies in West Africa.

Through a coordinated, whole-of-government approach, the United States can offer African nations a better alternative to China across the political, economic, health, and security spectrum. However, we must also understand that our partners will seek to diversify their partnerships.

111. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, if confirmed, what new high-return-on-investment activities would you recommend to counter China in AFRICOM?

Dr. KAHL. The best action to counter Chinese malign influence in Africa is to step up Department of Defense engagement across the spectrum of key leader engagements and security assistance. African Governments value United States assistance and partnerships, but if we do not step up, then they will continue to look to our competitors, including China and Russia. We should counter perceptions that the Department is disengaging from the continent with strong demonstrations of commitment. This means increasing and preserving funding for investments that are generally lower cost and offer higher rewards, such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, professional military education, exchange programs in U.S. military schools, port visits, training, and other security sector assistance programs to counter violent extremist organizations, improve maritime security, and support health and humanitarian response efforts.

#### NUCLEAR TRIAD

112. Senator BLACKBURN. Dr. Kahl, regarding modernization of the nuclear triad, I understand your position to be generally supportive of triad modernization, but your endorsement of specific modernization programs, such as the ground based strategic deterrent (GBSD) and long range standoff (LRSO) programs, is contingent on your review of classified information. If confirmed, do you commit to immediately reviewing relevant information and reporting back to Congress on your prioritization of funding of these programs?

Dr. KAHL. Yes. As I testified, the nuclear Triad has been a bedrock of our strategic deterrent for decades, and it is important that we modernize it. If confirmed, I am committed to conducting a review of the U.S. nuclear modernization program that will include the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD) and Long-Range Stand-Off (LRSO) programs. Based on this review, I will report my recommendations for funding priorities through the Department's annual budget request and will commit to meeting with Senators and Members of Congress to ensure a regular dialogue and to be responsive to your requests.

[The nomination reference of Dr. Colin H. Kahl follows:]

**NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT**

**PN79-6**

AS IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
January 20, 2021.

*Ordered*, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Colin Hackett Kahl, of California, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, vice John C. Rood, resigned.

\_\_\_\_\_, 2021.  
(Date)

Reported by Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed.

☐ The nominee has agreed to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

[The biographical sketch of Dr. Colin H. Kahl, which was transmitted to the Committee at the time the nomination was referred, follows:]

**Bio**  
**Colin H. Kahl**

**Education:**

- University of Michigan
  - 1989-1993
  - B.A. in political science (with honors)
- Columbia University
  - 1993-2000
  - PhD in political science

**Employment Record:**

- Michigan National Debate Institute, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
  - Lab Instructor
  - June-July 1993-2000 and 2002 (summer job)
- University of Michigan Debate Team, Ann Arbor, MI
  - Assistant Coach
  - June 1998-August 2000
- Spartan Debate Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
  - Lab Instructor
  - July-August 2002 and June-August 2003 (summer job)
- Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
  - Assistant Professor
  - September 2000-December 2004 and September 2006-August 2007.
- Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow at the Department of Defense, Washington, DC
  - Action Officer in the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations, OSD Policy.
  - January 2005-August 2006.
- Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.
  - Assistant Professor (and then Associate Professor) in the Security Studies Program.
  - September 2007-January 2009; January 2012-September 2014; and January 2017-December 2017.

- Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC.
  - Part-time Fellow (and then Senior Fellow).
  - September 2007-January 2009 and January 2012-September 2014.
- Department of Defense, Washington, DC
  - Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, OSD Policy.
  - February 2009-December 2011.
- Political Instability Task Force, Leidos, McLean, VA
  - Consultant
  - January 2012-September 2014 and September 2017-present
- Office of the Vice President of the United States, Washington, DC
  - Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice President
  - October 2014-January 2017
- Stanford University, Stanford, CA
  - Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Co-Director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation, and Professor of Political Science (by courtesy)
  - January 2018-present
- Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, Washington, DC
  - Strategic Consultant
  - January 2017-present
- National Intelligence Council
  - Associate
  - October 2017-present
- Biden Campaign
  - Volunteer foreign policy adviser
  - April 2019-November 2020
- Biden-Harris Transition Team
  - Volunteer (and NSC ART member)
  - July 2020-present

**Honors and Awards:**

- Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, awarded by Secretary Robert M. Gates in July 2011 for the period February 2009-July 2011

- Council on Foreign Relations, International Affairs Fellowship, Department of Defense, January 2005-January 2006.
- Research Fellowship, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University, 1999-2000.
- President's Fellow, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, 1993-2000.
- Hamburg Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University, 1998-1999 (declined).
- National Security Fellow, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1997-1998
- International Studies Association Environmental Studies Section Young Scholar Award, recognizing the best paper presented by a graduate student at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN, March 17-21, 1998.
- National Debate Tournament, Finalist, 1991.

[The Committee on Armed Services requires all individuals nominated from civilian life by the President to positions requiring the advice and consent of the Senate to complete a form that details the biographical, financial, and other information of the nominee. The form executed by Dr. Colin H. Kahl in connection with his nomination follows:]

117<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, 2020 -- 2021  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
ROOM SR-228  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510-6050  
(202) 224-3871

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE  
INFORMATION REQUESTED OF CIVILIAN NOMINEES

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NOMINEE:** Answer all questions and provide all requested information. If more space is needed, attach an additional sheet of paper to the Questionnaire and cite the part of the Questionnaire and the question number (e.g., A-9, B-4) to which the continuation of your answer applies. Unless otherwise required, an answer of "yes", "no", or "not applicable" is appropriate.

QUESTIONNAIRE, PART A

**NOTE:** Information furnished in this part of the Questionnaire will be made available in Committee offices for public inspection prior to the hearing, if any, and will be entered in the hearing record, also available to the public.

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION TO BE MADE PUBLIC**

1. **Name:** Colin Hackett Kahl
2. **Position to which nominated:** Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
3. **Date of nomination:** 20 January, 2021
4. **Education (List names of secondary and higher education institution attended, type of school [vocational, technical, trade school, college, university, military college, correspondence, distance, extension, and on-line], dates attended, degree received, and date degree granted):**
  - University of Michigan (1989-1993), B.A. in political science (with honors) 1993.
  - Columbia University (1993-2000), PhD in political science 2000.

**5. Employment record (List all jobs held since college, or in the last 10 years, whichever is less, including the title or description of the job, name of employer, location of work, and dates of employment. If the employment activity was military duty, show each change of military duty station as a separate period of employment):**

- Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, DC.
  - Assistant Professor (and then Associate Professor) in the Security Studies Program.
  - September 2007-January 2009; January 2012-September 2014; and January 2017-December 2017.
- Center for a New American Security, Washington, DC.
  - Part-time Fellow (and then Senior Fellow).
  - September 2007-January 2009 and January 2012-September 2014.
- Department of Defense, Washington, DC
  - Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, OSD Policy.
  - February 2009-December 2011.
- Office of the Vice President of the United States, Washington, DC
  - Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice President
  - October 2014-January 2017
- Stanford University, Stanford, CA
  - Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Co-Director of the Center for International Security and Cooperation, and Professor of Political Science (by courtesy)
  - January 2018-present
- Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, Washington, DC
  - Strategic Consultant
  - January 2017-present
- National Intelligence Council
  - Associate
  - October 2017-present
- Biden Campaign
  - Volunteer foreign policy adviser
  - April 2019-November 2020



- Biden-Harris Transition Team
    - Volunteer (and NSC ART member)
    - July 2020-present
  - Foreign Policy.com/State Group LLC
    - February 2017-present
6. **Government experience (List any advisory, consultative, honorary, and other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed in response to question 5, above):**
- Associate, National Intelligence Council (October 2017-Present)
7. **Business relationships (List all positions currently held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, and of any educational or other institution):**
- Consultant, Political Instability Task Force, Leidos, McLean, VA (January 2012-September 2014 and September 2017-present)
8. **Memberships (List all memberships and offices that you currently hold, as well as any memberships and offices you have previously held in professional, fraternal, scholarly, civic, business, charitable and other organizations):**
- N/A
9. **Political affiliations and activities:**
- a. If you have ever been a candidate for, or have been elected or appointed to a political office, list the name of the office(s); whether you were a candidate/elected/appointed; the year(s) during which you were a candidate, or in which the election was held or the appointment was made; and the term of office (if applicable):
- N/A
- b. List all memberships and offices held in, and services rendered to, all political parties or election committees during the last 5 years:
- None

- c. Itemize all individual political contributions of \$100 or more to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity during the past 5 years. List each individual contribution (not the total amount contributed to the person or entity) over this period:

6/16/2020 Biden Victory Fund \$2,800  
 6/16/2020 Biden for President \$2,353.16  
 6/16/2020 Biden for President \$446.84  
 3/4/2020 Biden for President \$500  
 3/1/2020 Biden for President \$250  
 2/12/2020 Eric Kutner Congressional Campaign, CA 53<sup>rd</sup> District \$100 (via ActBlue)  
 6/17/2020 Biden for President \$500  
 4/25/2019 Biden for President \$1,000  
 5/6/2016 Hillary for America \$250

10. Honors and awards (List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, and any other special recognition received for outstanding service or achievements):
- Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, awarded by Secretary Robert M. Gates in July 2011 for the period February 2009-July 2011
  - Council on Foreign Relations, International Affairs Fellowship, Department of Defense, January 2005-January 2006.
  - Research Fellowship, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Columbia University, 1999-2000.
  - President's Fellow, Department of Political Science, Columbia University, 1993-2000.
  - Hamburg Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, Center for International Security and Arms Control, Stanford University, 1998-1999 (declined).
  - National Security Fellow, John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1997-1998
  - International Studies Association Environmental Studies Section Young Scholar Award, recognizing the best paper presented by a graduate student at the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual International Studies Association Annual Convention, Minneapolis, MN, March 17-21, 1998.

- National Debate Tournament, Finalist, 1991.

**11. Published writings (List the titles, publishers, and dates of books, articles, reports, or other published materials that you have written or for which you served as co-author or editor, including articles and blogs published on the internet):**

**Books**

*States, Scarcity, and Civil Strife in the Developing World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). Examines the relationship between demographic pressures, natural resource scarcity, and violent internal conflict, with empirical discussions of dynamics in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

**Peer Reviewed Articles and Reports**

*If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran* (with Raj Pattani and Jacob Stokes), Center for a New American Security, May 2013, [http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS\\_IfAllElseFails.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_IfAllElseFails.pdf).

*Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb, Will Saudi Arabia Be Next?* (with Matthew Irvine and Melissa G. Dalton), Center for a New American Security, February 2013, [http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS\\_AtomicKingdom\\_Kahl.pdf](http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_AtomicKingdom_Kahl.pdf).

*Risk and Rivalry: Iran, Israel, and the Bomb* (with Matthew Irvine and Melissa G. Dalton), Center for a New American Security, June 2012, [www.cnas.org/riskandrivalry](http://www.cnas.org/riskandrivalry).

"In the Crossfire or the Crosshairs? Norms, Civilian Casualties, and U.S. Conduct in Iraq," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2007), pp. 7-46.

"Constructing a Separate Peace: Constructivism, Collective Liberal Identity, and Democratic Peace," *Security Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter 1998/99-Spring 1999), pp. 94-144.

"Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence: The Case of Kenya, 1991-93," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 1998), pp. 80-119.

**Other Articles, Book Chapters, and Reports**

"Aftershocks: The Coronavirus Pandemic and the New World Disorder" (with Ariana Berengaut), *War on the Rocks*, April 10, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/aftershocks-the-coronavirus-pandemic-and-the->

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"This is How Easily the U.S. and Iran Could Blunder Into War," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2019, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/this-is-how-easily-the-us-and-iran-could-blunder-into-war/2019/05/23/40dbbcae-7c07-11e9-8ede-f4abf521ef17\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/this-is-how-easily-the-us-and-iran-could-blunder-into-war/2019/05/23/40dbbcae-7c07-11e9-8ede-f4abf521ef17_story.html).

"It's John Bolton's World. Trump is Just Living in It" (with Jon Wolfsthal), *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kahl-wolfsthal-john-bolton-trump-north-korea-iran-venezuela-20190514-story.html>.

"Trump's Iran Policy is Becoming Dangerous," *Foreign Policy*, May 7, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/07/trumps-iran-policy-is-becoming-dangerous/>.

"Pompeo's Dangerous Delusions: What the Trump Administration's Iran Policy Gets Wrong," *Foreign Affairs*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-kahl-wolfsthal-john-bolton-trump-north-korea-iran-venezuela-20190514-story.html>.

"Trump Has Nobody to Blame for North Korea but Himself," *Foreign Policy*, July 11, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/11/trump-has-nobody-to-blame-but-himself-for-north-korea-nuclear-pyongyang-pompeo/>.

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"How to Exit Iraq" (with John Nagl and Shawn Brimley), *New York Times*, September 5, 2008.

"Baghdad's Misguided Crackdown on the Sons of Iraq" (with Shawn Brimley), *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 2008.

"Cancel Iraq's Blank Check" (with John Nagl and Shawn Brimley), *Foreign Policy* (online), August 2008, [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=4454](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=4454).

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*Shaping the Iraq Inheritance* (with Michèle Flournoy and Shawn Brimley), Center for a New American Security, June 2008.

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"How We Fight," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 6 (November/December 2006), pp. 83-101.



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"Population, Development, and Revolution," in *Encyclopedia of Modern Revolutions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006).

"The Nature of Warfare: Natural Resources and Civil War," in Peter Dombrowski, ed., *Guns and Butter: The Political Economy of International Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

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"The Political Ecology of Violence: Lessons for the Mediterranean," in Hans Günter Brauch, et al., eds., *Security and Environment in the Mediterranean: Conceptualizing Security and Environmental Conflicts* (Berlin: Springer 2003), pp. 465-76.

"Demographic Change, Natural Resources, and Violence: The Current Debate," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 257-82.

**12. Speeches (Provide the Committee with two copies of any formal speeches you have delivered during the last 5 years—of which you have copies—in which you addressed matters relevant to the position to which you have been nominated).**

To the best of my ability, I have identified any formal speeches I delivered in the past five years in which I addressed matters relevant to the position of Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. While I do not have remarks for any of the speeches below, I have included links to the video recordings of these remarks. If additional speeches or materials are identified, they will be provided to the committee promptly.

- "Merits of the Iran Deal," Stimson Center, August 10, 2015, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBYBaoq02\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBYBaoq02_o)
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- "Maximum Pressure or Danger? Assessing the Risks of Trump's Policy Toward Iran," World Affairs Council, July 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufWmNGMV7xY>
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#### **COMMITMENTS IN FURTHERANCE OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT**

**NOTE:** In order to exercise their legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress timely receive testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch. A simple "yes" or "no" response is appropriate.

13. Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate Committees of Congress?  
  
Yes
14. Do you agree, if confirmed, to provide this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so timely?  
  
Yes
15. Do you agree, if confirmed, to consult with this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you?  
  
Yes
16. Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this Committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate Committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic

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[The nominee responded to Parts B-F of the Committee questionnaire. The text of the questionnaire is set forth in the Appendix to this volume. The nominee's answers to Parts B-F are contained in the Committee's executive files.]

**SIGNATURE AND DATE**

I hereby state that I have read and signed Parts A and B of the foregoing Senate Armed Services Committee Questionnaire, and that the information provided therein and in any document appended thereto, is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, current, accurate, and complete.



This 11 day of February, 2021

[The nomination of Dr. Colin H. Kahl was discharged from Committee on April 21, 2021, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on April 27, 2021.]

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